



PRIMARY CHARGE AND SERMONS

BISHOP JEUNE

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& Theol.*

PRIMARY CHARGE

SERMONS

AND

BY THE LATE

RIGHT REV. FRANCIS JEUNE, D.C.L.,
LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH,

"HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

ed.
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I.

A CHARGE DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY AND CHURCHWARDENS OF THE DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,
AND BRETHREN OF THE LAITY,—

Your thoughts, I feel sure, like mine, recur at this moment to the venerable man whom I have succeeded, but do not replace. Personally I knew him not; but your affectionate remembrances, so often expressed in my hearing, have made me familiar with his true self, his warm heart, his paternal tenderness, his deep faith, his simple piety. To his gentle rule, and to the influence of his holy life, we owe, in no slight degree, the peace and harmony which prevail in the diocese; and we feel deeply grateful to his memory.

Memory of
Bishop
Davys.

It was with deep interest therefore, that I Church
Extension. entered on my first work among you; for that work was a continuation of the last work of that good man, interrupted only by his death, which it perhaps hastened. It was the consideration of a project for increasing church-accommodation in

the diocese generally by the combined efforts of the two archdeaconries ; and, though such combined efforts were found to be unnecessary, the movement originated by your late bishop has been productive of great benefits. The munificence of the powerful landlords of former times has, among us, so amply provided for the spiritual wants of posterity in this respect, that, notwithstanding the increase of population, the addition of some twelve or fourteen churches in two of the counties of the diocese would, for the present, suffice. Each archdeaconry has therefore been left to its own resources ; and in each archdeaconry progress has been made. In Northamptonshire, one church has been built and endowed by the munificence of the Duke of Grafton. Three are in course of erection at Wellingborough, Kettering, and Peterborough. In Leicestershire more than £12,000 was promised for the object at or after a public meeting, over which his Grace the Lord Lieutenant presided. One noble church has since been erected, at great cost, in Leicester. Towards this the Church Extension Fund contributed £3500, and the Permanent Church Building Fund £1000. For the larger balance we are indebted to the liberality of Earl Howe, Mr. Perry-Herrick, the family of the late bishop, and the energy and influence of Canon Fry. Two other sites have been purchased in that town at a high rate ; and the foundation-stone of a second church has just been laid there.

The necessity of restoring existing churches Church Restoration. operates in Northampton, as in the diocese generally, against efforts for building new churches. But great is the work which has been done under that necessity. Since the last Visitation in 1863, not less than 116 churches—that is, about one-sixth of all the churches in the diocese—have been rebuilt, enlarged, or else wholly or partially restored. Some, however, of the number are still in the hands of the builder. The church of Evenley has been rebuilt by the unaided liberality of Mrs. Pierrepont. The church of Stoughton, by similar munificence on the part of the late Major Powys-Keck and his son, Mr. Powys-Keck. Surprising it is that, in a part of the country where there is no large accumulation of manufacturing wealth, so vast a cost could have been sustained. To the self-denial, to the unwearied exertions of the clergy, to their brotherly union, which it is pleasant to behold at our happy church-openings, and to their influence with a large-handed laity attached to our faith and its ministers, this great result is chiefly due.

The liberality thus manifested is sometimes Church Rates. urged as an evidence that church-rates are no longer necessary, and that it will be as easy for us to keep up our churches as it is for Dissenters to raise and repair their chapels. Be it remembered, however, that our churches—the badges of ancient nobility on the nation's breast—are not

lowly buildings like the humble houses of prayer by the roadside, which yet do honour to our Non-conformist brethren ; they are stately fabrics, which were erected not merely to meet the actual wants of a village hamlet, but with a view to the greater glory of God, and in just proportion to the wealth of our benefactors. Nor did patrons confine their munificence to building and endowment. They charged their land with the cost of upholding the grand houses of God which they had raised ; a cost, like the first cost, in not a few cases beyond the means of the parishioners themselves. It is remarkable that, only two hundred years ago, the rate for the reparation of the fabric was still, as it had been from time immemorial, real, and charged upon the land ; but the rate for ornaments was personal, and charged upon the goods. Unwise, therefore, and even unjust it would be to forbid the collection of funds, originally free gifts, willingly paid in all but a few parishes, and indispensable to the due support of churches like ours. But the absence of real discontent in the people is no security for church-rates. In Parliamentary government a fraction sufficient to turn the scale in favour of one party or the other, and aiming only at one object for which majority and minority may care less than for power, can, by what is thought a political necessity, seduce even the hands which once defended to destroy institutions.

The abolition of church-rates may ultimately be thus compassed. On you, my brethren, already overburdened, the additional burden will, I fear, fall heavily ; and notwithstanding your goodwill, it will fall too on the poor, whose daily benefactors you are, because your means will be crippled. In some parishes it could not be borne at all. For one great effort aid may be obtained ; but wretched for the poor incumbent of a poor parish would be the task of collecting, at home and at a distance, year after year and shilling by shilling, the means of providing for the ordinary wants of a church.

The spiritual benefits of church restoration have been marked. More frequent attendance at the services ; more fervour in worship, if only through the sympathy which numbers kindle ; more decorous observance of rules ; more attachment to the Church ; more love, therefore, of Christ, I trust ; more fruits of love ; more souls made wise unto salvation. But indeed I have heard few complaints as to the manner in which worship is conducted in the diocese ; and none, I believe, implying disloyalty to the Church and our solemn engagements. Reverence without extravagance is the general character of our services. As regards our cathedral church, which is best known to me, I must express my gratification at the zeal and liberality displayed in the effort to conduct Divine worship there in a manner worthy of the simple majesty of the

Benefits of
Church
Restoration.

services of the Church of England, and to render that magnificent fabric as useful for the general purposes of the diocese as its position will permit.

Increased
frequency of
Eucharists
recommended.

On one point, however, I feel some anxiety. There are in the diocese 338 parishes in which the Lord's Supper is celebrated less than twelve times a year; in 129 of these, four times; and in three churches, thrice only. In my judgment, that Holy Sacrament ought to be administered at least on one Sunday in each month, and at the great festivals, in every church. It has been said, but I am unwilling to believe it, that some neglect in this respect is due to the reluctance of church-wardens to supply the wine. Such an obstacle can of course be removed if there be a will. Frequency of Communion should be the great distinction of the English Church. The Church of Rome makes what is called the Sacrifice of the Mass, and not, according to the Lord's institution, the Communion, the chief end to be attained in the Eucharist; if, indeed, where the cup is withheld, and something only which is declared not to be bread is given, it can be said that there is a Communion at all. Some religious bodies see in the Sacrament only the figure of a thing absent. That in both cases there should be comparatively little solicitude for frequency of Communion is natural and intelligible. But, as for us, we are bound to act in the spirit exhibited by our Church in the strong addresses, peculiar, I believe, to herself, which she enjoins us

to make to the faithful upon each administration ; and therefore to give them frequent opportunities of approach to the Lord's table. For we who believe (I am quoting the words of our Church) "that we have there the true figure of a thing present, and there receive, if God have purified our hearts by faith, not only the outward sacrament, but the spiritual thing itself ; not the figure only, but the reality ; not the shadow only, but the body ; how should we not desire the participation of these mysteries, and oftentimes covet after this bread, and thirst for this food, not as specially regarding the terrene and earthly creatures which remain, but always cleaving to the Rock from which we may suck the sweetness of everlasting salvation."

The hour of administration of the Lord's Supper has greatly varied in the Christian Church. In the modern Roman Church it is, as a rule, celebrated between the hours of eight and twelve in the morning. In Tertullian's time it was observed, not only in the evening at the love-feast, but in assemblies before dawn. In the age of St. Augustine, the Christians of Egypt were in the habit of communicating on Saturday evening; but generally in the morning, certain days excepted, when the administration was in the afternoon. St. Augustine, too observes that in some places in Africa, on the Thursday before Easter, the Communion was administered both morning and evening; and in other places only towards night. Our Church has

Time of
administra-
tion of the
Lord's
Supper.

not limited the celebration of the Holy Communion to any special hours of the day. The ordinary time of administration is at the close of the first hour of the evening. But at any time of the day or night we are authorized to transport the Church to the bedside, and there to commemorate and to communicate to a departing or languishing brother the benefits of the precious death of Christ. In some of our churches early Communions have been adopted with great advantage, and without any idea of thus gradually bringing in what is called Low Mass in the Romish Church. In one church where the Holy Communion is administered at three different hours on successive Sundays, the alms at the several services have varied in the proportion of six, four, and two; a fact showing how well the arrangement suits different classes of the faithful. In some cases the Eucharist has been administered in the evening of the day of Confirmation to all, or all but a few, of the catechumens from the parish. Results, however beneficial, would, of course, not tempt a worthy pastor to introduce, or the bishop to sanction, the use of the liberty allowed by our Church, if Scriptural or even reasonable objections against its use could be made good. But warrant ample there surely is for evening Communion in the institution of His Supper by the Lord, and in the practice of Apostolic and after times. "While they were eating He took the bread, and after supper He took the cup." Surely our Church does

well when she bids us in “these matters to cleave to the first beginning, hold fast the Lord’s tradition, do that in the Lord’s commemoration which He Himself did, He Himself commanded, and His Apostles confirmed.” The rule seems eminently safe ; yet what a havoc of errors and superstitions would it make if observed ! Even as to the circumstances of place and time, in themselves indifferent, it is from those who vary from His institution, not from those who accord with it, that apology is due. But I have heard it said that the administration of the Eucharist in the evening by the Lord Himself, is not an example to be followed ; that it is a mere exception, in no case to be a precedent. This is bold ; but I read something bolder still. I read that evening Communions are a profanation. If so, the reproach cast upon them falls on Christ and His Apostles ; for His Apostles, too, broke the bread at the evening meal : or, rather it shows that in the minds of those who utter it there are theories which were not in the mind of our Lord or His Apostles.

The communicants, my reverend brethren, are properly the Church ; and if the number of our communicants does not bear a fair proportion to the congregation, we have cause to fear that our people are not well instructed in the truths which concern their salvation. He who has found peace with God by faith in the Atonement on the Cross will not be slow to show forth the Lord’s death, and to

Increase of
communi-
cants a test
of increase
of faith.

claim at His table the full benefits of His Passion. Ignorance and timidity keep back many who would fain do the Lord's bidding and be blessed. That ignorance we must seek to remove ; that timidity we must seek to embolden. Before Confirmation you doubtless strive to fix the great truths of the faith in the youthful memory. But the impression should again and again be deepened by special instruction. Adult classes, suitably assorted, and taught regularly, will ever be regarded by the zealous clergyman as one of the most efficacious means which God has placed in his hands for the salvation of souls.

Confirmations.

Feeling, as you all do, the great value of the ordinance of Confirmation, I have thought it expedient to avail myself of our increased facilities of locomotion for the purpose of holding Confirmations more frequently than they have been held heretofore in the diocese ; more frequently, indeed, it would seem, than was necessary or even suitable as regards small parishes. Since July, 1864, I have confirmed twice over the whole diocese, more frequently in great towns, and on 113 occasions in all. In the archdeaconry of Northampton, 11,067, in the archdeaconry of Leicester, 7237, have been confirmed, out of a population of about 490,000. The returns, carefully analysed, show that about one-half of the parishes contributed candidates to the amount of three per cent. of their population ; and that many parishes fell grievously short of that

average. Two populous parishes there were which presented catechumens to the amount only of one quarter per cent. Daventry exhibits the largest proportion of any town parish. In several country parishes a much higher average has been reached. Unavoidable causes, my brethren, may cause great fluctuations ; but can unavoidable causes account for failures so complete ?

If our catechumens be less numerous than they ^{Schools.} ought to be ; if we too often lose them after Confirmation ; it certainly is not from want of schools and opportunities for early religious training. In forty-six parishes only, that is, in one parish out of twelve, is there no school. Most of these parishes are small and within reach of schools. In Northants and in Rutland, where an excellent system of school inspection and prize schemes exist, the standard of attainment reached seems to be higher than in other midland counties ; nor does it appear that Leicestershire falls below the ordinary level. Of many schools I have heard high praise. The Government Inspector has specially commended the schools of St. Martin's, a Diocesan Inspector the schools of St. Margaret's, both in Leicester ; and the efficiency of those schools is attributed to the energy and to the personal care of their ministers. But we have schools which are in a lamentable state as to discipline and attainment. I also hear complaints from Government Inspectors of the want of thought exhibited by the children

in the religious examination. “I have scarcely been in a school ten minutes,” observed one of these able gentlemen to me, “before I discover whether the clergyman takes care of it or not.” So it is, my reverend brethren. The development of intelligence, the religious tone, the gentle bearing, all that, in the best sense of the word, constitutes education, depends on your own patient and loving labours. But of such labours the reward is great; for where, if indeed you be “apt to teach,” can you gather such a spiritual harvest as in your schools? where can you find such affection, the best earthly reward of Christ’s ministers? Evening-schools, which seem necessary to compensate for the withdrawal of children from our day-schools at a tender age, have been found successful where zeal, and tact, and aptitude for teaching have been brought to bear upon them. Sunday-schools fail to satisfy us when we think upon an ideal state in which every child would be taught on that holy day in a holy family. But how could they be abandoned in the face of the actual state of things? how could we leave children to the streets? how could we take from many their only opportunity of learning Divine truth?

A large number of excellent clergymen have, under the lead of the earnest Archdeacon, lately undertaken the duty of school inspection in Leicestershire. They will be found there, as our Inspectors are found in the other counties, friends

to advise and to stimulate, not harsh critics to blame or to expose. More than ever is it essential that we should labour to ensure the attainment of the chief end for which, as God's servants, we support schools; namely, the religious and moral teaching of the lambs of the flock. There exists now for managers and teachers a special temptation to attend exclusively to secular subjects. To counteract this temptation will be the chief aim of our own Inspectors.

A strong feeling of dissatisfaction as to the system of popular education now in force is prevalent among public men. Children leave our schools before they can have mastered the first elements of knowledge; for even at eight years of age they can earn their own livelihood, and in some cases soon afterwards much more than their own livelihood. Endeavours will probably be made to substitute for that which now exists a system of purely secular and compulsory education, supported by rates, and managed by elective boards under the control of a central authority. But the scheme will meet with many obstacles. A mere secular education, valued by some persons although it is irreligious, will be acceptable to few Christians. The necessary funds will be subject to the parsimony of the payers, and to the scruples which now affect church-rates. Parents who perhaps would value little the education, beneficial or pernicious, then to be afforded, would feel it a grievous sore

Dissatisfaction with present system of education.

to be mulcted of a large part of their means of supporting their children and themselves. No one, I believe, proposes to give to the needy compensation for the loss which public policy would entail upon them. Compulsory attendance will involve a strict police, pecuniary penalties, and, it may be, imprisonments. It will therefore, perhaps, be thought safer to strengthen and extend our present system ; and to apply a gentler pressure, by requiring, before a child is permitted to labour for hire, certificates of proficiency and of attendance for a given number of hours during the year. As for ourselves, religious education is the education which we must promote. The Church of England, which relies neither on superstition nor on enthusiasm, but on the chastened and intelligent piety of her members, cannot safely suffer any to remain untrained in head or heart. A purely secular education can produce fatal evils, as Archdeacon Sinclair has shown to be the case in the United States and in Canada. But should such a system unhappily be forced upon us, we must not desist from efforts to counteract its evils. We must loyally promote the success of the policy of the State, though it may fail to commend itself to our judgment.

Systematic
Charity.

I must again venture to press on your attention the duty of systematic charity for great and good objects, local, diocesan, and general in turn, on the part of every congregation. To the whole of our

people should be offered the opportunity of producing the fruits of faith. An interest in missions, in the promotion of Christian knowledge, in those noble infirmaries in which the bodily sorrows of poor humanity are relieved, should be kindled and kept alive in all the redeemed of Christ. Great things, I know, are done by many of our people, but there are among us glaring exceptions. In some ninety churches it appears that little or no effort is made for religious and charitable institutions. What may be done in a parish of 400 souls with no resident gentry, will be learned when I tell you that in the parish of Scaldwell a sum averaging £110 a year is raised for charitable purposes of various kinds. A clergyman can scarcely have a better proof of his influence for good than the willingness of his people to make sacrifices for the glory of God, and the welfare of man.

The number of candidates for deacon's orders, which amounted to twenty-one annually on an average of ten years prior to 1864, has in the last three years sunk to sixteen. The causes of this decline, common to our dioceses generally, and experienced by Dissenters, too, as regards their ministers, have often been pointed out; and I will not dwell on them. But even under present circumstances, when we cannot be very fastidious, there is hope that those students who do offer themselves for the ministry in the Church of God, will, before long, reach a higher standard of attain-
Candidates for Ordination.

ment than they at present reach. My hope is founded on the fact that the University of Cambridge has adopted a system of examination which will induce many young men to study Divinity with a view to their degree. Many of them will be induced by the stimulus of honours, perhaps eventually, too, by the ordinary and substantial rewards of success in the Universities, as well as by higher motives, to exert all their powers in the most blessed of studies. If to the improved system of examination, of which the subjects as regards honours will probably receive much extension, should be added a full provision for individual training in the colleges, over and above the teaching of the able professors of the University, we may hope for a race of candidates not likely to be carried away, as smatterers in religious knowledge are, by every blast of vain doctrine, and who will revive the glories of Anglican theology. If so, Cambridge, while it secures to itself increased greatness and honour by its wise initiative, cannot fail to exercise influence on all the other bodies to which our Church looks for her ministers.

Obligations
of the
Bishop to
Clergy and
Laity.

In the discharge of my duties I have been welcomed under many roofs; I have needed and received the co-operation of many hearts and hands. For hospitality unbounded, for assistance of inestimable value, I have therefore to return cordial thanks to the clergy and laity of the

diocese. To the archdeacons, to the rural deans, to the diocesan inspectors, I owe especial gratitude. I could not, if isolated, have borne the anxieties which come on a bishop daily. Possessing in effect, and I would say, happily, but little coercive power, it is by a nobler power that a bishop can do good and repress evil; it is by the power which he finds in the help of his loyal and faithful brethren, and in the support of a loyal and faithful laity.

But without the aid of our lay brethren, Obligations
of the
Clergy to
the Laity. you too, my brethren of the clergy, would be impotent indeed. It is for them, indeed, that we are what we are. They are the Church, we their servants for Christ's sake. But they, too, are servants of their brethren; they, too, have ministries to fulfil. Enlist them, then, however high, however humble their station, in the service of the Church. Let them teach in day-schools, in night-schools, in Sunday-schools; and learn themselves, as men best learn, by teaching. Accept and encourage parochial visitors; and thus bind rich and poor together, for time and eternity, by the strong link of kindnesses shown for the sake of Christ, and of kindnesses received as from the hands of Christ. Let those to whom God has given ear and voice, as well as grace and gratitude, lead in your songs of praise. Those will love the Church and the Lord of the Church best who serve them best.

One class of coadjutors there is, however, whom the clergy have not to raise up, but whom the Church and the law have in their wisdom given. To those coadjutors, the churchwardens, I would now specially address a few words. Great are your powers, and great your duties, my beloved brethren; and you have powers, too, that go beyond your legal functions, and duties which love of Christ can alone impose. You are the officers of the bishop, and the ministers of the parish as regards the external accessories of worship. The repair of the church, the preservation of its goods, the observance of order in and around the church, and many other such cares, are incumbent upon you. Especially are you charged with the allocation of sittings in the church, in such a way as to accommodate conveniently the largest possible number of parishioners. This is a delicate, and sometimes an odious, duty; yet a duty to be discharged, discreetly indeed, but without fear or favour. Remember that on your faithfulness in this duty the salvation of souls may depend; and you will obey God rather than man. To you officially it is that the bishop has, according to the Canons, to look for responsible information, and the law for its due observance. Let me remind you that what shall be the ornaments of the Church is regulated by law. Nothing can be added to them which is not enjoined; nothing taken from them which is enjoined. But, placed on high among the people, you have, as I

have said, moral as well as legal duties. Friendship, counsel, support, you owe to your minister. To the flock you must be examples of godliness, gravity, soundness in the faith. You are, I trust, in every case, and from a higher feeling than a mere sense of official duty, habitual partakers of the Holy Communion. Would that your office were magnified, as it ought to be, in the eyes of all. None would, I believe, then undertake it who were not themselves seeking to serve God ; none would minister in holy things even as laymen, who were without deep reverence for the Church of God. If your office were so magnified, I should not have to express my regret that some of your presentments have been filled up by the minister, the last person to whom you should assign, the last person who should accept, the task.

Doubtless, my reverend brethren, zeal, love, Temper required to retain co-operation. temper, tact, courteousness, are indispensable to him who would gather, retain, and keep in harmony a band of fellow-helpers to the truth ; but earnestness and singleness of purpose cover many errors of infirmity. And can our Master require less of us than earnestness and singleness of purpose ?

But interesting as are the questions which affect a diocese, they yield in interest to questions which affect the truth, the Church, and society at large. Such questions, many, anxious, and of vital moment, at this time claim our attention. Condition of the world and the Church generally.

The human
mind now
revolts
against all
authority.

Three centuries of intellectual activity, three centuries of growing liberty and growing wealth, have brought the civilized world to universal doubt and universal discontent. Proud of its successful revolt against authority as regards natural science, confident in itself, but distrusting all besides, human reason now revolts against all authority, and seeks, by its own efforts, to reconstruct at once truth and society. It fears not chaos if it can only hope to create. Thrones, Churches, institutions, laws, must be cleared away if their site be needed. If it be necessary, the few must be sacrificed for the many. Can man arrive at truth, philosophical, moral, religious, without God? Can democracy subsist without God? These are the questions to be solved over all the civilized world; and it is by actual experiment, I fear, that the issue must be tried. The experiment as regards philosophy and morals is indeed well-nigh complete.

New philo-
sophies.

Genius and erudition have made, of late years as of old, prodigious efforts to create systems of philosophy and ethics without the aid of wisdom from on high; and of late years, as of old, genius and erudition have signally failed in the attempt. A succession of men, endowed with mighty powers, but voluntarily placing themselves, eighteen centuries after Christ, in the intellectual position of heathen sages, have, after all, only brought the thinking world to something worse than the hopeless scepticism in which ended the wondrous wisdom

of Greece. System after system of philosophy has reigned and been dethroned. System after system has proved the impotence of man to discover the highest truths without Divine guidance. But each false system, though powerless to create, is powerful to destroy. Each still retains many adepts ; and all conspire against God, and for the work of revolution.

In the last and at the beginning of the present century, it was a material and mechanical Atheism ^{Material and mechanical Atheism.} which attracted the vulgar of scientific men. It was the Atheism which denies all existence but the existence of matter—of matter eternal, and containing a divinity called Force in every atom ; the Atheism which regards thought as a mere secretion of the brain, and vice and virtue simply as products, “like sugar or vitriol” ; the Atheism which sees order, but not design, in the universe ; laws, not Providence, in the course of things.

To this blank and revolting materialism suc- ^{Pantheism.} ceeded Pantheism as revived in Germany—the system which confounds the Infinite and the finite, and which makes God the sum of all things. God, it teaches, is brutal in brute matter, mighty in the forces of nature, feeling in the animal, thinking and conscious only in man. This system is, in its first aspect, more noble than material Atheism, but in truth it is not less fatal to all that is noble and good. It indeed makes man—nay, the beast that perishes ; nay, the very dung on

the earth—divine ; but it also makes God human, animal, material. It degrades what is high by exalting what is low. Better to deny God after all, than to debase Him ! Pantheism is, if possible, a worse Atheism.

Positivism. Of both these systems, Positivism, the system which at this moment claims exclusive possession of truth ; Positivism, for such is its barbarous name, to which all thought (we are told by a leading Review) in Germany and England, as well as in France its birthplace, is now converging, speaks with no less contempt, though with less hatred, than it speaks of Christianity. “Day-dreams,” it says, “all the assertions, all the negations alike of philosophers ; impotent attempts to compass impossibility.” Of God, if there be a God ; of the soul, if there be a soul ; of revelation, if revelation there be, man can know, man need know, nothing. Away, then, it cries, with mere hypothesis. To the positive, to the material, to the teaching of the senses, to observation of facts, philosophy must limit itself. This system is mean, though superecilious. Perhaps, however, Positivism rises in comparison with Atheism, which itself is less base than Pantheism ; for it is better to ignore than to deny, as it is better to deny than to degrade God.

Suicide of philosophy.

Human reason, then, left to itself, leaves us, as to God, a threefold choice : we may deny God, we may degrade God, we may ignore God. A

noble result! A godless philosophy ends in suicide. So it will ever be. To quote from the noble close of the *Dunciad*—

“Philosophy, which leaned on Heaven before,
Sinks to her second cause and is no more.”

As is the theology, so is the morality of all ^{Destruction of morality.} these systems. One specimen of their ethical teaching will suffice for all. Hear *Spinoza*, the greatest of Pantheists: “Every act of man, as every fact of nature, is produced by fated laws. Free-will is a chimera, flattering to our pride and founded on our ignorance. Not only has every man the right to seek his pleasure, he cannot do otherwise. He who lives only according to the laws of his appetites is as much in the right as he who regulates his life according to the laws of reason, in the same manner as the ignorant man and the madman has a right to everything that his appetite compels him to take. A compact has only a value proportioned to its utility; when the utility disappears, the compact disappears too. There is folly then in pretending to bind a man for ever to his word, unless at least that the man so contrive that the breach of the compact shall entail for him more danger than profit.”

Utter, heartless selfishness, restrained by cow-^{Practical results of} ardice, is then to be our sole rule of life! Our ^{false philosophies.} final destiny is to perish like the brute; or like bubbles to be absorbed, when we burst, into the ocean of being on which we now float.

False systems must give way for the highest philosophy.

These systems may for a time prevail ; but their prevalence cannot be permanent or universal. Conscience, taught, it may be, by suffering, must, after a while, regain its sway. Souls are lighted by wisdom from on high with a "ray that can guide us upward to a better day," and that better day is the revelation given by Him who is the Sun of Righteousness. Souls will not for ever forego their Divine patrimony of truth, their portion in God, their glorious origin, their immortal destinies, their faith in the absolute, the infinite, the true, the beautiful, the good ; which have their seat in God, and which our consciousness of the limited, the finite, the evil, necessarily implies and forces upon our conviction. We know, and we bless God for the knowledge, that within our breasts are secured, by Him who is the "Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," intuitions, religious, moral, æsthetic, intellectual, as infallible, as evident, and as imperative for unsophisticated man as are for the bird or the bee the instincts which build the nest or the hexagons of the comb. Our faith is firm in the Great First Cause, in final causes, in right as right, in good as good ; that is, our faith in God, who is in the world yet who is not the world ; and in creation by that God. Our faith is firm in His providence, in unselfish love, in justice, in all the principles on which philosophy, science, art, morality, law, religion, are based. But that faith

is not capable of demonstration from premises beyond itself. It needs none, for it is as certain as the evidence of sensation. Neither Atheist, Pantheist, nor Positivist can wholly cast it off ; but a critical and disintegrating reason can itself lose, and shake in others, confidence in those primordial principles. Confidence in them once shaken, the descent into the abyss of doubt and negation and immorality is rapid. Reason can, however, provide herself with a break ; for revelation is a fact which admits of proof, and which thus falls within the compass of reason. The fact of a revelation once established, subjective belief finds guidance and confirmation strong in that objective assurance. The Word of God without verifies the Word of God within. Theology becomes the stay of philosophy ; and philosophy the usher of theology.

Now on the dominant philosophy of an age depends its religious and moral character. The false thought, which after a while rules the world, is at first a hazy abstraction in the closet of some student ; then, by the aid of brilliant writers, it becomes the scepticism of literature and fashion, and before long it is seen in all its hideousness in the obscene pamphlet or in the blasphemy of the tavern. “A belief,” writes a philosopher of repute, whose teaching is in affinity with much that Positivists hold, “which has won over cultivated minds, is sure, unless it be crushed by force, to reach the masses. This opinion scatters the illusions

Influence of
philosophy
on society.

in which men sometimes indulge, that on historical, philosophical, or scientific subjects, researches can remain in the confinement of books and schools. No, whatever is intended, they must inevitably strike a blow at the former order of things—intellectual, moral, social." This witness is true. Such a blow has in our day been struck with effect. Abroad, philosopher and infidel are synonymous terms; and men there freely avow themselves to be philosophers. At home anti-theism is less bare-faced, for religion has had, and still has, more power in England. But decay of faith among us is too clearly indicated by the tone in which popular journals speak of the mysteries of religion, of miracles, of prayer, of Divine Providence, of the retribution of sin, and of revelation itself. It is observable in social intercourse, in the tales which supply the idle with pastime, in the sensuous poetry of the day. Blasphemies, which a few years ago would have shocked even worldly men, pass almost unheeded now. Both at home and abroad there is an active propagandism in favour of a socialistic revolution, which, employing its usual weapons, offers to the evil and to the unwary, under the names of science, rationalism, secularism, independent morality, draughts of blasphemy, envy, and lewdness, which the evil and the unwary swallow with greediness.

Extent of
the influence
of godless
philosophies

Society, it is avowed, as well as philosophy, is to be rebuilt from its foundation. Is it to be godless,

like philosophy ? Are we to look for an anti-religious as well as for a democratic revolution in England ? In other words, is it a fraction only of our working men which casts off God, religion, and moral restraints ? If so—and I believe it to be so —there is hope that the democracy of England will hold the same place among democracies as our past governments have held among the governments of the world ; and that the violence, the spoliations by law, the judicial murders, the shameful rapacity, the gross corruption of other revolutions, will not stain ours. It is to God only that a democracy is accountable, and to His judgments. If it be not a law to itself, no human power can restrain it. Even now a slight menace can paralyze government and legislation among us. Even now law is in our great towns impotent against terrorism ; and terrorism can, as we see, evoke leaders who combine boldness and hypocrisy ; and to aid them, relentless executioners, the sympathy of numbers, and the evil eloquence which extenuates or justifies wickedness ; in a word, it can evoke all the instrumentalities of fierce revolutions. What if for vaster and more alluring ends a vaster conspiracy should overspread the land ! What if frantic lust of enjoyment, made more frantic by the recent outburst of luxury on every side, should rush to its gratification by a shorter cut than the paths of toil ! Such a fear only a few years ago cast France at the feet of an absolute ruler. What,

again, if those who claim the exclusive possession of truth in philosophy, or men like them, should attain to the exclusive possession of political power which they claim also ! Hear the motto prefixed to recent Positivist publications put forth in this country by men of note ; a motto taken from M. Comte, the author of the system : “ In the name of the past and of the future, the theoretical servants and the practical servants of humanity are worthily assuming the direction of the business of the world, and excluding for ever the political supremacy of the slaves of God, Catholics, Protestants, Deists, as men behind their age, and perturbators.” Do not think this vaunt a mere hallucination. Facts justify it in some degree. The Positivist school includes men who lead opinion, and play a part in polities. But man deposes God only to take His place ; and even Positivists can court Divine honours. “ Humanity,” they tell us, “ is definitely substituting itself for God, without, however, forgetting His provisional services. What is humanity ? It is the great Being. The great being is the aggregate of beings past, present, and future. Not of all beings, but only of human beings. Not of all human beings, but only of those who freely concur in bringing to perfection the universal Being. They are called convergent beings.” But, I ask, who will care for past convergent or for future convergent beings ? The living hierophants of the school must be our

gods. Like the Romans, we are to be governed by deified Rulers. Verily God makes foolish the wisdom of this world.

Against evil days, my brethren, our safeguard, under God, is in the reverence of the people for God, and for the Word of God. Men of God, proclaim then with increased zeal, if possible, those eternal truths which save souls and which save society! Reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Your reasoning may alarm worse men than Felix. If the corruption of human nature be on the side of the enemies of God, you also have allies in the intuitions of conscience. Men of God, you have proclaimed these truths with zeal, and you have been heard. "Religious England!"—so speaks of our country the ablest of living French bishops, who however loves not the Reformation—Religious England! but what has made England religious if not the Word of God and the ministers of God? You have done much. This people is sound at heart. Do not judge our artisans by the fierce men who too often lead trades-unions, by those whose brutality to wives brings them before the police-courts, by those whom you see reeling in the streets, by those who love the price of blood or of corruption. If, according to our Ordination vow, we seek out God's children in a naughty world, we shall find in many a dreary street, and in many a gloomy home, piety, real refinement, tenderness, self-sacrifice. God has

Re-assuring
considera-
tions.

much people in the worst of cities. Be it your glory to bring them to Him. In the worst of our cities multitudes have been won to Christ by faithful servants of God. A vast preponderance of good men, however, there must be in the land if we are not to perish. In times of revolution the bad and bold ever seize upon the lead; while modest, and perhaps timid, virtue hides herself and mourns, when she should come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Envy is the great revolutionary passion. That is one reason, it may be, why, in the only code written by the very hand of God, the positive laws have for their conclusion and their safeguard a law which bears a purely moral aspect, and which cannot be enforced by the magistrate. "Thou shalt not covet," were the last words spoken by the Lord on Sinai. Every Sunday we proclaim that law. If that law be written in the hearts of our people, we shall be safe. The great lesson which Christianity had to teach the slave and the serf was patience in tribulation. The great lesson which Christianity has now to teach the freeman armed with power, is self-control.

Effects of
the spirit of
the age on
religion.

But what if the Church itself should be spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit? What if we ourselves have lost confidence in the Word of God? What if we be ourselves weary of the old truth, and long for revolution? What if, sharing in the general discontent of the world, and reckless of consequences, ministers of God should be con-

spiring to erect some new Church on the ruins of the old?

The spirit of its age must ever affect the existing Church. Religious thought feels all the fluctuations of philosophical thought. The clergy, the most highly educated class, many of them trained by philosophy, are almost the first to be affected by new ideas. The effect of these ideas may be to attract; their effect may be to repel to an opposite extreme; but in both cases they tend to disgust men with the truth, and to make them court revolution in the Church. Such is the case now. Two antagonistic rationalisms menace us. Both profess to reverence, both would supersede, the Bible. Both desire to strengthen our Church by alliances which would imply surrender of vital truths. In ruin reconciled, they can war together against our faith, leaving it to time to decide whose shall be the spoils of victory.

Of both the compromises proposed I would now speak; and first of the compromise with ^{Religious} ^{compro-} ^{mises.} unbelief. To minds shaken by sophistry, yet incapable of throwing off piety, the temptation to meet the world half-way, and by compromise to reconcile irreconcileable systems, is hard to be withstood. Every evolution of false philosophy has therefore produced some corresponding religious compromise. Thus Deism mediated between the Atheistic denial and the Scriptural affirmation of the supernatural. It upheld, with the latter, the being of a personal

Creator and Ruler of the universe, the immortality of the soul, and the eternal reward of the righteous ; it rejected, with the former, the revelation made by God in the Bible. Socinianism receded less far from Christianity ; for it attributed some kind of Divine authority to the Lord and to His Word ; while it refused to see in that Word His Godhead, and the doctrines plainly written there. It retained the form of godliness, and through it seduced many ministers of religion within and without the Church. But, in truth, there are halting-places in religion only for the weak. For the strong, compromises are stepping-stones. Between Infidelity and Christianity there is no logical mean.

Semi-pan-
theism the
compro-
mise now in
vogue.

At the present moment it is Pantheism, discarded though it be in Germany, which chiefly influences the Rationalists of France and England. “Buddhism,” I once heard it said from a famous pulpit, “Buddhism is Christianity.” But Buddhism is the chief form of Indian Pantheism, and counts in the Eastern world four hundred millions of adherents. Ministers of religion who yield to Pantheistic views do so in various degrees, it would seem, and inconsistently, perhaps not always consciously. It has its mitigated forms. Our Rationalists appear still to cling to a personal God, who is external to, and above, the world ; and thus they do not, like Pantheists pure and simple, make man and all other things Divine, and each

man his own God. They do not deny Christianity; they claim to be Christians in a higher sense. But the supernatural in religion they assume to be impossible; and the supernatural is the substance of religion. They deny it in prophecy, in inspiration, in miracles; and they make man, and each man, the sole origin and the supreme judge of religious truth. They hold that there is no inspiration but that which belongs to all men, though in all men it varies in degree according to the moral and intellectual culture of the individual. Unlike Socinianism, mitigated Pantheism acknowledges that the belief of the orthodox is found in Holy Scripture; but, unhappily, it acknowledges in Scripture no authority superior to the internal criterion of man. Christianity it regards as the highest determination of the mind within the sphere of religion; and revelation, not as an act isolated in time, but as something continuous, universal, and progressive. Exceedingly deceitful is the system, and to none more deceitful than to those who profess it. They can claim, and believe that they feel, profound piety. They can speak with the fervour of mystics. They can dwell with reverence, as we do, nay, with enthusiasm, on the union of God and man in the person of the Lord, on the inspiration of God's Word written, on the Atonement of the Cross, on the resurrection and ascension of Christ. But, alas! in the view of too many, that union is no more than the union of God

and man in each of us, and the Lord was more Divine than we are, only because He was more holy and more wise : and the Spirit which moved holy men of old was equally in Luther, or Bacon, or Shakespeare, or Raphael : and the Atonement reconciles not God to man, but only man to God ; that is, to himself : and the resurrection and ascension of Jesus need not be historical facts (so a synod of French pastors has lately voted), but may be images merely of the ultimate triumph and enthronement of goodness and truth. They regard the devout sentiments and the high aspirations of the heart as the essence of religion ; and Fetichism, Vedas, Korans, Scriptures, Creeds, as manifestations, more or less enlightened, of those sentiments ; more or less true, according to the advance of the times ; but all as relatively true. Those several manifestations have been, they say, necessary stages in the education of our race. Pantheists can subscribe to all creeds, and minister in all churches consistently with their principles. By them all doctrines may be held or denied ; or held and denied at once. They may be held, in that they manifest religious intuitions ; and denied, in that they fall below the culture of the present inward light. The only heterodoxy is, according to them, exclusiveness. Dogma, they hold, must be banished from the Church.

Effect of
Pantheism
on Scrip-
tural inter-
pretation.

But the Bible is dogmatic and exclusive. Christ speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes.

He is the one Master. He is a jealous God. The Bible, then, while admitted to be Divine, must, if Rationalism is to prevail, be convicted of being human too ; that is, full of error and imperfection. It must come to be regarded as the mere voice of the congregation, as the expression of devout reason ; and as subject, therefore, to the verifying faculty. For the purpose of Pantheists every objection devised against it by science, falsely so called, or by the new criticism of Germany, must be sought out and complacently paraded. Its cosmogony must be proved to be unscientific and mere poetry ; its facts unhistorical ; its miracles legends or allegories, or natural phenomena ; its prophets only fierce patriots, who denounced kingly or sacerdotal usurpations ; its prophecies fortunate guesses, or prophecies after the event. It must be treated like any other book ; and from every other book we should scout the supernatural. Criticism must reconstruct the history of the people of God, as Niebuhr, Michelet, or Mommsen have reconstructed each of them his own Roman history out of the compilations and legends of Livy. The Lord, too, must be shown to be human and like unto us, sin even not excepted. The true Christ had, we are told, been lost ; criticism has recovered His lineaments. In one of those truer gospels which have lately appeared in France and England, I read that the voice from heaven, by which the Father, according to John the Baptist, testified to the beloved

Son, was a clap of thunder; and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the accidental flight of a pigeon. Yet Jesus and John were not, we are assured, impostors merely, like a juggler and his confederate. They were enthusiasts of humanity. In another of these gospels Jesus is represented as a vulgar thaumaturge, who however believed in His own power over Nature. But I will not dwell on what is so painful. Let me only add, that the makers of the new gospels have, with all their genius, succeeded only in showing that man could no more have devised the Christ of the Evangelists, than philosophers can by searching find out God. The human element, that is, error and imperfection, having once been admitted in the Bible and Christ, the Bible and Christ shall be extolled, studied, venerated as Divine, held out as the noblest models and rules of life. Whole existences shall be devoted to the language, to the antiquities, to the history of the Bible. The story of Abimelech shall, if you will, be studied with more care than Christians have hitherto, for the most part, given to the words spoken by the Lord Himself. Every fragment shall be gathered, that nothing be lost. Christ too shall be loved with more than a Christian's love. Christ shall make tongues eloquent. Christ shall be the whole of Christianity. Let Him but bow down to our inward light, to Him shall be given all the kingdoms of the world, and He shall be set on the pinnacle of the temple.

But Rationalists, avowed or unconscious, have no desire to destroy the Church of England. They seek only to rationalize it, and thus to give it breadth, comprehensiveness, and the whole strength of the people. They would make it a truly national Church. They are in earnest. Their openness proves it. They regard their scheme as the means of saving the Church from imminent perils. If the principles of Rationalism be once admitted, they see no reason why such a Church should not be founded. It is thought by the new reformers, that men will believe, if they may believe what they will. Such a Church we are now offered. Such, we are told with exultation, must be the Church of the future. But, unfortunately for the scheme, Pantheists in their various shades are not yet sufficiently common among us, and we are not yet prepared for a Church so national that it must cease to be a Church, so comprehensive that it must exclude Christians. We are not prepared to regard as a Church a conglomerate of beliefs and unbeliefs cemented by endowments. The notes of triumph which have rung in our ears were premature; though a youthful legislator destined to inherit a name which its bearer has made historical, has expressed his conviction that "the stationary, conservative, dogmatic element in the Church is already opposed by a progressive, liberal, rationalistic element, which is already struggling for the mastery, and threatens

in time to carry everything before it"; and that Parliament should "declare that reading the Liturgy, which," he says, "unfortunately implies certain doctrines as to the government of the world, and presupposes the leading doctrines of Christianity, should not imply any mental agreement on the part of the reader." He thinks, too, that "unbelievers have an equal right with believers to minister in a national Church." Nay, according to him, they might be preferable, because they could change their teaching to suit the changing taste of their congregation. If, with these principles, we are at liberty to combine the opinion which a living divine of brilliant imagination has expressed, that "the Prophet, who, instead of claiming Naaman as an exclusive convert, accords him a gracious permission to perform the accustomed act of devotion to the Syrian god, Rimmon, even whilst acknowledging the supremacy of Jehovah, displays a gentle and Catholic spirit," we shall arrive at the conclusion that the ideal of a national Church is a Pantheon with Atheists for its ministers.

Such appears to be, in its principles and its natural issues, the liberal Rationalism to which some minds among ourselves have yielded, in various degrees.

The
Rationalism
which leads
to Popery.

Few, I believe, however, of the ministers of our Church who have lost their grasp of her rule of faith will be found to substitute their own inspiration for the Word of God; or will, in order to

rebuild the Church on a broad foundation, consent to bring within her courts and her ministry men avowedly of any creed or of no creed. Their tendency will rather be to seek for some authority external to the Word of God, but claiming to be the Divine voice, and, in effect, as being later, overruling that Word. It will be towards re-union with the great Church whose fatal corruption and whose fatal seduction it is that she claims to speak with that Divine voice. But the error is in both cases essentially the same. The Pantheist who attributes to himself, the Romanist who attributes to the Pope, an office belonging to the Holy Ghost alone, are alike Rationalists, and alike set at nought the Word of God.

It must be owned that, to minds weak but devout, weary of the strife of tongues, shrinking from the inward trials of faith, and dismayed by the perils of our Church, the temptation in a time of doubt at once to escape from all doubt by accepting one single proposition without proof, is hard to be resisted. So, too, is the temptation to compromise Divine truth, and to accept even gross superstitions, if such must be the price to be paid for the immediate satisfaction of that noble aspiration after unity which occupies so large a place in the Saviour's sacerdotal prayer. One Church, and one Church only, there is which claims to be the permanent impersonation of Christ in all His offices, and which does not hesitate to issue as

*Seductions
of Popish
Rationalism.*

she thinks fit, on her own authority, new dogmas to be held, like the doctrines of Christ and His Apostles, as necessary to salvation. That Church, though she has lost the strong, retains an increasing hold, through her increase of superstition, on the superstitious, who form the great bulk of her adherents, as of mankind ; and promises, if we will submit to her, to strengthen us with the strength of two hundred millions of believers of every tongue and in every clime. Is it marvellous that now, or at any time, many should listen to the temptation ?

“ Such an omniscient Church we wish indeed,
 ‘Twere worth both Testaments ; cast in the creed.”

So wrote one who afterwards yielded to the wish. The wish has the sanction of God, would Dryden have said after he yielded. It is a want of the soul. It corresponds to a necessity in religion. God cannot have failed to satisfy the one, and to provide for the other. Such a Church there ought to be ; such a Church, therefore, there is. “ The Bible,” writes an eminent living professor of the Sorbonne, “ would be a sad and fatal gift without a Divine interpreter. It would be a firebrand cast into society. It would be a dead letter at the best.” Again, in their disparagement of the Word of God, the Pantheist and the Romanist are at one. Both will love the Bible, if only they may interpret it.

Some, however, of those among ourselves who crave for a divine interpreter, find one, not in Rome, or in any present authority, but in a vague abstraction which they call the Church. That Divine interpreter has spoken, as they believe, through Councils, great or small, which are distinguishable from other, and it may be, contemporary and more numerous but heretical Councils, by certain technical rules. They infer the truth of a Creed from the validity of the Council; not, as our Church, the validity of the Council from the truth of the Creed. It has spoken, too, they tell us, by what they are pleased to call the consent of the Church Catholic, at some time or other and in various ways manifested. The functions, however, of that infallible interpreter have, we are told, been in abeyance for some ten centuries, and cannot be resumed till all the Catholic Churches of the world are again at one, and again able to debate and to determine in a free Council consisting of all the Bishops of universal Christendom. To such a Council they promise to yield unquestioning submission.

In the Roman Church it is not now a Council, ^{Infallibility of the Pope.} but the Pope himself, who is the voice of God. There are still deep though only muttered misgivings in national Churches as to the formal assumption by the Roman Pontiff of this personal infallibility now in fact exercised by him, and submitted to by them. The time, however, is at

hand when it will be proclaimed as a truth to be believed on pain of forfeiting salvation. Recent ecclesiastical proceedings at Rome have been represented as evidences of infatuation. Perhaps they rather indicate the masterly guidance, which can secure a vigorous policy even under a Pope of feminine mind. The paramount question as to the seat of infallibility in the Roman Church, debated for centuries, has been definitively settled in favour of the Pope, at the fortunate moment when national Churches have ceased to owe anything to governments, and their episcopates have, by their need of daily support and the energy of the Jesuit Fathers, been brought to the feet of the Pontiffs. Spiritual power thus concentrated, exaggerated, and wielded by that mighty order which Pope Ganganelli, at the very time when he cut it off, called the right hand of the Church, may yet, even if the temporal power should for a time be lost, enable Rome to play a leading part in the political drama. Democracies hereafter, and despotisms, as kings formerly, may become its instruments. In every country it possesses the exclusive allegiance of masses of adherents. To every Parliament in the world it sends devoted delegates. What price, parties, and even nations, may not submit to pay for the alliance of that great, central, patient, pervading power, it would be rash to predict.

Such arrogance shocks us; but if convenience and our idea of the fitness of things are to determine

the case (and no other argument worthy of a thought has ever been urged), the Pontiff and his ultramontane bishops are, I doubt not, in the right as against the Gallican party, and as against all who believe that there was, and that there would again be, in what is called the undivided Church, a Divine authority, competent infallibly to interpret, and in fact to supersede, Holy Scripture. Far more dignified is the decision of a Pope than the wrangles of a Council; far more convenient the appeal to a living and present authority than to antiquated decrees, themselves needing the Divine interpreter, who has so long been dumb.

But the argument proves too much; for, as our acute Chillingworth has shown, “It is more useful, for many excellent purposes, that all the patriarchs rather than the Pope alone; yet more useful that all the archbishops of every province, the bishops of every diocese, the parsons of every parish, the fathers of families, yes, and that every man and every woman were an infallible judge; just as much as that the prevention of controversies and heresies is better than the decision or the condemnation of them, respectively. A conclusion most gross and absurd, against sense and experience; which shows that the ground also must be false from which it evidently and undeniably follows; namely, that that course of dealing with men seems always more fit to Divine Providence which seems most fit to human reason.” In this, again, Roman

The argument
worthless
as regards
both.

Rationalism logically forces on a conclusion differing little, if at all, from the individual inspiration of Pantheism.

A Divine voice in the Church.

A Divine voice there is indeed in the Church, and that a living voice, not a dead letter; for "the Word of God is quick" as well as "powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That Divine voice has once for all delivered the faith to the saints. To us are committed the lively oracles of God, which were able, even when less complete, without Pope or Council, to make wise unto salvation the child Timothy, his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois. Ours is the God-breathed Scripture, which is sufficient, too, to make the most advanced man of God perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and sufficient therefore for the instruction of the Church in righteousness. We rest upon the Word which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them who heard Him, "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost." We need, we crave for, no other revelation. On the same evidence we would, however, give earnest heed to all which we might hear from Popes and Councils. But if no such evidence can be produced, we might look, if a personal living infallibility still exists, for some intimation at least in the Word of God, that the Holy Ghost purposed to commission a perpetual

succession of inspired organs of His will. Nothing, however, in the Bible suggests to any, but the convinced, the infallibility of any assemblage of men however venerable, or the infallibility of the successor of Peter, whether at Rome or at Antioch ; as nothing suggested his own supremacy to Peter himself, who disclaims dominion over the faith of his co-elders : as nothing suggested the supremacy of Peter to Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles, when he withstood Peter to the face : as nothing suggested to the same great Apostle an appeal to an infallible Council or to an infallible bishop, when he had to provide the elders whom he had ordained with resources against the heresies which he foretold.

The rule of faith of the Church of England is Rule of
faith of the
Church of
England. laid down beyond the possibility of mistake. It is the sole and unapproachable authority of the Divine Scripture. Holy Scripture, our Church teaches, contains all that is necessary to salvation. Whatever may be proved thereby, by whomsoever spoken, ought thoroughly to be received and believed. Nothing, by whomsoever ordained, has strength or authority, unless it may be declared that it be taken out of Holy Scripture. On the sole ground of their conformity to Scripture does she accept the definitions of some General Councils, and reject the definitions of other Councils equally numerous. She guards against undue deference to them, by laying down expressly that General Councils may

err, and have erred, in things pertaining unto God. Our Articles contain, as we read in the declaration prefixed to them, “the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God’s Word.” Even as to the points ruled by the four General Councils, the Church of England has, in the first five Articles, which precede the recognition of the older Creeds, laid down the true doctrine in an expanded form of her own. It was not to the faith or to the discipline of the undivided Church, that is, to the admixture of truths and gross corruptions which prevailed during dark ages, that our Reformers resorted when they desired to purify our branch of the Catholic Church. The course which they took is described as follows in the book which Convocation has pronounced “The Apology of the Church of England” : “ We have searched out of the Holy Bible, which we are sure cannot deceive, one sure form of religion ; and have returned again unto the primitive Church of the ancient Fathers and Apostles.” Such is the order ; from Scripture to Catholic unity, not through the primitive Church to Scripture. Not that we undervalue Catholic consent, or antiquity. To trustworthy testimony, from whatever source it comes, to Councils, to Fathers, yes, and even to the heathen Pliny, we listen with deference. They may suggest ; they may confirm ; but in matters of faith, proof, and certainty, nothing but God’s Word can give. It would be strange if the famous divines of former times had

no wisdom to impart to us. We therefore cherish their great works. If, however, after consulting Scripture on any point, and using all the aids and appliances of testimony and ancient wisdom, and every other aid and appliance, doubt or difficulty remain, we conclude that the point in question must remain as yet unsolved. But, in fact, the great truths of the faith are not far to seek. Nothing as regards such truths is in a hard text but what is in easy texts too. Infallible interpretation is sought, not to enable men to find in Holy Scripture what is there, but what is not there. The difficulties which men seek to remove are the difficulties found in setting aside plain Scriptures which thwart their preconceived notions. Difficulties are raised with a view to enable men not to find in Scripture what is there.

Who does not, however, long too for unity, and ^{Longing for unity.} for the Church in which, as a holy man now with Christ wrote, "all that is good in every Church shall be gathered into one, and the weakness of every Church shall be laid aside ; the Church which shall be national without nationalism ; individual without individualism ; one without uniformity ; possessing variety without a sectarian spirit ; Catholic without Romanism, Protestant without protests" ; the Church without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle, or any such thing—the glorious Church, the bride of Christ. In that one Holy Catholic Church we all believe ; for that Church we all hope ;

and to that Church, if we be faithful, we all shall come. But to the Church militant here on earth, which should be holy no less than one, infallibility is no more promised than impeccability ; freedom from the sin of heresy no more than freedom from the heresy of sin. Yet pray, strive, hope against hope for both the holiness and the purity of the Church we must ; as we must pray, strive, hope against hope, that God's will may in all things be done by men in earth as it is in heaven. But for unity at the cost of Divine truth ; for unity at the cost of dishonour to the Word of God ; for unity at the cost of superstitions allowed ; no, not for a moment can we entertain a wish ! Separation on such grounds need not fill us with scruples. The true Church is the Church which has the truth. Unity abides with the truth ; not with majorities if they swerve from the truth. It was with Elijah and the seven thousand secret ones, not with Israel. It was with Paul at Antioch, not with Peter, Barnabas, and the brethren. It was with Athanasius against the world, not with the world against Athanasius. It will be with the little flock amid the great apostasy at the coming of the Lord.

Projects of
re-union by
negotiation.

Is it not strange that ministers of our pure and apostolic Church should be seeking re-union with Rome by negotiation at the very moment when the Pope, his bishops standing by, is about formally to proclaim his own divine infallibility ? Is it not strange that they should do so, “ after the Vicar of

our Lord," to use the words of Dr. Manning, "has twice in these last years spoken with the voice of infallible truth, thereby testifying not only to the singular prerogative which, as the first-fruits of grace was bestowed on the immaculate mother of God, and to the great constructive principles of morality and jurisprudence on which the Christian world is founded, but also to the perpetual assistance of the Spirit of God, by whose light the Church and its Pontiffs in all ages, now as at the beginning, discern and declare the limits of truth and falsehood?" Is it not strange, that foremost in urging that re-union should be a great man, who is so sensitive to error, or the faintest justification of error, that he repudiates even negotiations for union with the Scandinavian Churches, and warns us against drawing closer our connection with the Episcopal Church of the United States of America? Is it not strange, that one so learned and pious should urge that re-union, though he is dismayed "by the advent of the 'Age of Mary,'" as he speaks, "anticipated by Faber, in comparison with which all previous devotion to her should be slight; and of that era anticipated by Dr. Manning, in which the Pope is to be continually declaring new articles of faith to be believed, without authority of Scripture or tradition, on his sole authority; and doubts "wherein these" new eras "should issue, whether in the coming of Christ, or through a collapse of faith in the coming of Antichrist"?

Is it that no false doctrine is perilous but that which is arbitrarily called heresy? Is it that heresy by addition is not as monstrous as heresy by rejection? Is it that Mariolatry, and the assumption of a Divine prerogative, are not in themselves and their consequences as evil as the worst of heresies? Surely the Church of Rome has destroyed what little hope might have remained of re-union with her on Scriptural terms, "by superinducing," to use the words of Chillingworth, "upon the rest of her errors the doctrine of her own infallibility, whereby her errors are made incurable; and by her pretending the Scripture to be interpreted according to her doctrine, and not her doctrine to be judged by Scripture, whereby she makes the Scripture ineffectual for her reformation." Surely she has thus placed herself in a worse position than bodies which have lost things even of high value!

Re-union
with Rome
as she is,
impossible
for us.

With Rome, then, as she is, re-union is impossible if we are to remain what we are. We can abandon no one truth; we can receive no one superstition. It cannot be for us to move. Truth can offer no compromises. As for us, we put no bar to inter-communion, for we refuse communion to none who would have communicated with the bishops of Nice. What can we do more? Rome will not change. Who can believe that Rome will ever condemn the Fetishism which she has encouraged and encourages? Rome will not even denounce the idea of her

sainted Loyola, that the blood of Mary is by Transubstantiation in every Host ; for this follows logically enough from her carnal notions as to the Eucharist. The mistress and mother of all the Churches will scout the very name of re-union. She is, as ever, in her own view, the one Roman and Catholic Church, which neither heretics nor schismatics can divide when they fall away. If an infallible Church should make a real concession to regain such perverts, she would give the lie to her infallibility. The first step to be taken by heretical bodies, if they would recover unity, must be to declare that they are no Church. If re-united then we are to be, it is in us that the necessary change must take place. We cannot even negotiate. We must be content to capitulate, after a few unmeaning explanations perhaps, to satisfy our honour.

Nay, explanations are, it would seem, scarcely needed from Rome at all. We have found them for ourselves. The doctrines and the ritual of Rome were, we are given to understand, whether intentionally or not, left by our Reformers, in our Liturgy, in our Articles, in our Homilies, and in our Rubrics. The Articles and the Decrees of Trent are, it seems, not really at variance ; and might, by an intelligent casuist, be signed simultaneously. Great efforts have been made to prove this paradox. The Articles and the Canons of Trent, of course, both require skilful manipulation for the purpose.

Disposition
to capitu-
late, and
ingenious
explana-
tions.

I cannot enter at length into the subject. But take, if you will, the strongest case of all, and admire the simple process by which concord can be found in discord. It is a case in which a Tridentine Canon has to be dealt with. Rome asserts expressly, the Church of England denies expressly, the doctrine of Transubstantiation. But the two Churches, we hear, are in truth at one; for the doctrine which our Church denies, and which Rome asserts, is not the same doctrine. And here is the reason, put forward by Dr. Pusey: "With regard to the term 'Transubstantiation' there must be a real difference between the meaning which it had in the minds of the Schoolmen, and that which it now has since the Catechism of the Council of Trent. For it is there taught with authority that the 'Eucharist has been called bread, because it has the appearance and still retains the quality natural to bread of supporting and nourishing; but the Schoolmen thought that, with the change of substance, that power of nourishing ceased. Yet, this being granted, I know not what can be included in our term 'substance,' which the English Church affirms to remain, which is not also included in the Roman term 'accidents.' Clearly the doctrine which the Church of England rejects under the name of Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine, is only one which overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, in that the sign and the thing signified

are the same. This was so according to the doctrine of the Schoolmen, in which substance was equivalent to matter. The meaning of the word 'substance' being changed, the Roman doctrine must be so far changed too." This reasoning, which is the reasoning of Dr. Pusey, a man of most acute mind, may not be conclusive, perhaps not even intelligible, to all our minds. Doubtless the Catechism of Trent teaches that in the Eucharist or Host the substance of the bread does not remain at all; and that the Host is called bread because it retains, beside the appearance of bread, the "property" of nourishing our bodies; but it teaches also that in the Host there is another substance, the body and blood of Christ, with His bones and His nerves, as it expressly says. It teaches, too, that among the reasons why God has been pleased to feed us with that very body and that very blood under the appearance of ordinary food, one is that we feel a natural horror at eating human flesh and drinking human blood; and another, that we are thus enabled to escape the reproaches of our enemies. The substance, then, that nourishes—and human flesh and blood can nourish—need not be the substance of bread. There is in the Host human flesh and human blood, according to the gross materialism of the doctrine inculcated in the authoritative Catechism of Rome. In that Catechism, however, we can better learn the real doctrines of Rome than in decrees. The

decrees of the Council itself are designedly vague and ambiguous, and they are framed rather with a view to controversy than for a guidance of the faithful. It will assuredly be a novel idea at Rome that the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation, the doctrine of the Schoolmen, the doctrine of the Lateran Council, the doctrine of the Council of Trent, the doctrine of the Catechism of Trent itself, has been changed by a few words in that Catechism; and that to Rome or to the Schoolmen the guilt of heresy attaches. Rome will scarcely be persuaded that the Council of Trent desired, as our Reformers are gratuitously supposed to have desired, to leave the doctrine against which it protested, though in a latent state, in the very formularies in which her protest was expressed. Our own clear Articles require treatment no less daring. Thus they repudiate in express terms the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, penance, worshiping and adoration of images and relics, and also invocation of saints, as a foolish thing repugnant to the Word of God. And yet casuistry seeks to prove that you may, if you will, set up the confessional with its sacramental confessions and its judicial absolution; that you may invoke saints and worship relics, and yet hold our Articles all the while. But the feat seems slight when compared with the address which can make the assertion and the denial of Transubstantiation equally true.

It is not, my reverend brethren, by scholastic subtleties, or such distinctions as the Jesuit Santa Clara devised, that great religious revolutions are effected. Nor is much reliance perhaps placed on such means of pacification by its advocates generally. Thrice, in somewhat more than two centuries, they have been tried and failed. Before our people can accept them, they must be brought to feel as their authors feel. The wish must be father to the thought.

Re-union with Rome will not be effected by scholastic sleight of hand.

The proposed re-union must be effected, then, if it is to be effected at all, by some other process previous to negotiation. Such a process has been set on foot. As for the purpose of one school the Church must be rationalized before it can, by an amalgamation of diversities, become broad and great; so, for the purpose of another school, it must be Catholicised before it can become one with the great Church of Rome. Such is the object avowed by leaders of the Ritualistic excesses which have startled us of late years. The Reformation, we hear, is to be rolled away. Genius, learning, eloquence, failed some thirty years ago to produce more than individual perversions; but it is hoped that vestments of many colours, crucifixes, lights, altars, incense, gestures, the embroiderer, the carver, the chandler, the perfumer, will succeed, where genius, learning, eloquence have failed. Many of the observances of Rome—saint-worship, the worship of the Virgin, auricular confession, and I know

Process by which it is proposed to effect re-union.

not what others—have been revived among us, and are daily recommended in little manuals professing to be the united productions of ministers of our Church.

But the contest is practically to be carried on at that point of the battle-field in which the Reformation gained her victory. Success there must in truth be decisive. If against the plain words of Scripture, against primitive antiquity, against reason which points out the countless absurdities which follow from the theory, against the consent of our great divines, against our formularies, we can be brought to believe that there must be, nay, that there is, in our churches a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ Himself for the quick and the dead, on a proper altar, by a proper sacrificing priest, it may safely be foretold that we shall not long keep apart from Rome. What is such a sacrifice but the Mass? Against the Mass our martyrs strove unto death. For the Mass Mary and Bonner kindled the fires of Smithfield and Oxford. The men who burnt, and the men who were burnt, were statesmen, scholars, divines; and yet we are told that persecutors and martyrs agreed all the while. The liturgies which they respectively composed or anathematized are, we are told again, Catholic in the Roman sense. On this point let us now briefly dwell.

To constitute the Mass two things are necessary.

The priest must have in his power very Christ, God and man, in body, soul, spirit, and divinity ; and the priest must offer this very Christ in sacrifice to the Father. Either error escaped, the other remains comparatively innocuous. By what process the bread and the cup become Christ, very God and very man, it matters little. The essential thing is that by the priest's consecration the elements should be deified. In one of the manuals to which I have referred, it is apparently taught (as it was taught by John of Paris) that, as God the Word was made flesh in the womb of the blessed Virgin, so Christ, God and man, by a like hypostatical union, is made bread and wine. He becomes, it seems, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, impaneate and invinate (to coin analogous words) as He was incarnate. When, however, I read the prayer, "O Bread made Flesh, have mercy upon us !" which is, in one of the little books to which I have referred, addressed to the consecrated elements, I am reminded of the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation ; perhaps of all the theories propounded when it became necessary to crystallize a popular superstition into a fixed dogma, the theory least encumbered with difficulties.

Well, as to this local, objective, and bodily presence of Christ God and man in the consecrated elements, or under their appearances, what says the Church of England ? Does she for one moment countenance it ? Does she not adopt every test

What constitutes the Mass ?
First, real presence of Christ, God and man, in the elements.

Doctrine of the Church of England as to presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

which excludes it? Does she not draw a fast line between the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and the body and blood of Christ itself: between the sign and the thing signified: between the outward part which meets the eye, and the inward part, the grace imparted in the Eucharist to the faithful soul? Hear once more her familiar words: "The wicked eat not the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. They do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the sign or sacrament of so great a thing. He who steadfastly believes that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed His blood for his redemption, doth eat and drink the body and blood of Christ though he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth." Do the wicked, according to the Church of England, receive the body and blood of Christ? Can the body and blood of Christ be received without the elements? These tests were regarded as crucial at the Reformation. Our Church takes them without hesitation. Again, she says: "The body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken by the faithful in the Lord's Supper; but the body is given, taken, eaten, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner." Given then they are, not by him who extends the bread, but by the God of heaven; taken, not with the receiver's fleshy hand, but with "the hand of the heart," as our Church speaks in another place: received not "into the mouth," but, to use her words again, "into the

soul sound and whole in faith." Take another test. If the bread be Christ, it should be worshipped as Christ Himself would be worshipped, with prayer and lowliest prostration, if he should at this moment appear among us. The Church of Rome does adore the Host with her highest adoration; but worship to the bread, or to any bodily presence in the bread, our Church forbids as idolatry. Distinct then as is the portrait from the original, as is the deed with which is conveyed the estate from the estate itself, is the sacrament of the body and blood from the body and blood; though with the sign is given to the worthy receiver the thing signified. Take another test. Could we say, as Roman Priests can say consistently enough, that we are the creators of our Creator? Could a true son of the Church of England call, as Romanists habitually do call, the consecrated wafer God?

In the second place, the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice depends, as Dr. Pusey rightly says, on the doctrine of the real objective presence; and it is in fact of use only for that material sacrifice. For the sacramental part of the Eucharist, which "is in truth as much superior to the sacrificial as God's part is superior to ours," as Dr. Waterland writes, the local objective presence would be useless and embarrassing. It would be useless, for the soul feeds not on what the body digests. It would be embarrassing, because of the loathsome consequences

Local presence of Christ in the elements needless for communion.

which the theory involves. Even if those holy souls who stood at the foot of the cross could, without crime, have drunk of the precious blood as it flowed to the ground along the accursed tree, would they have fed spiritually on Christ? Can the blood disguised, and however disguised, the natural blood of Christ on the Romish theory, avail more now?

Secondly,
propitiatory
sacrifice of
very Christ
in the
Eucharist.

But the Church of England does not hold the local, objective, and bodily presence of Christ God and man in the elements; therefore the Church of England does not hold the doctrine of the proper and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ God and man in the Eucharist. If he admitted the minor premiss, Dr. Pusey himself would admit this conclusion. The minor premiss is evidently true; and perhaps further argument on the question of sacrifice is needless. But we have much more than inferential evidence on the matter. The Church of England expressly contradicts the doctrine of a proper and material sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. She contradicts it by her acts. She contradicts it by her very silence. She contradicts it expressly. "We need," she says, "no sacrificing priest, no Mass, no altar sacrifice and oblation, no means established by man's invention." "Let us take care," she says again, "that we travail to understand the Lord's Supper, that we be no cause of idolatry, of no dumb Massing. Let us take heed lest of a memory we make it a

sacrifice. The sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said that Christ was offered for the quick and the dead, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." She contradicts it by her acts. Real presence, altars, the Host, correlatives all, have been banished, name and thing, from her Churches and her Liturgy. Solitary celebrations, such as are the private Masses of Romanism, have been by her abolished and jealously provided against. This the Church could not have done if the idea that there is, in the celebration, a sacrifice of infinite value independently of the Communion, had not been by us utterly rejected. From the commission to the priest at his ordination she has ejected the authority to offer Christ for the quick and the dead which once stood there. She contradicts it by her silence. The silence of a Church as to a doctrine once held is emphatic condemnation of that doctrine. The daily sacrifice of Christ would, if a reality, be so momentous an act, that it must occupy the chief place in ritual, and be the subject of the most explicit teaching. It is idle to seek for it beneath some rubric or ambiguous phrase. Observe, too, that while the Church applies, in her noble Communion Service, the term "sacrifice" to what is in the true sense a sacrifice,—to alms, to praises, to thanksgivings, to the whole action,—she does not even once apply it to the consecrated elements; for, like Holy Scripture itself, our Church knows only of the one oblation for sin once for all offered on

the cross. Never once does she speak of offering the elements. Of the remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist she does speak; but remembrance is of that which is past or absent. Of the memory of His death she speaks too, and that death was a proper sacrifice; but the commemoration of a sacrifice is, properly speaking, no more a commemorative sacrifice, or a sacrifice at all, than the banquet in commemoration of a victory is, properly speaking, a commemorative victory, or a victory at all. To plead the sacrifice of Christ, is not a phrase known to our Church; and if it were, to plead a sacrifice, or to offer a sacrifice in intercession, is not to sacrifice. Pleading and intercession require no material oblation. In the Eucharistic Service of the Church we do offer many and true sacrifices, as I have before observed; Christ we do not sacrifice. We do not continue His propitiation. We come to partake of its benefits, denoted by the terms "body and blood." Be not alarmed, you have not been saying Mass all this time.

It is in the face of declarations most explicit that some ministers of our Church do not hesitate to assert that we celebrate Mass. Few of you, however, would deny the assertion of Dr. Manning when he says that "the Church of England imposes on the people a disbelief in Transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the altar." One energetic Ritualist, too, avows that "it is no Mass which the Church of England celebrates." He adds, that "friends

and foes are agreed on that head," and that "there is no escaping the fact that the revisers of 1552 endeavoured to exclude Mass." We can hardly think that they have failed so to do.

As for the Ritualism by which we are told that ^{Ritualism.} the Church is to be Catholicized, its suppression will be little gain, if the false doctrines of which it is the badge are to prevail. If the doctrines be abandoned, Ritualism will fall of itself.

But, be the event of the movement favourable or fatal in the end, its immediate effects are full of mischief. It sows disunion, and, what is often worse, it sows suspicion among us. Even changes in themselves lawful and beneficial, a closer adherence to the rubric, more frequent communions, increased animation in the services of praise, are regarded with jealousy as insidious devices by a people who will no more be beguiled than forced into Romanism. This jealousy is not unnatural, for they find that in the "Plan of the Campaign" for Catholicizing the Church, which has been widely circulated among us, small stratagems, such as the substitution of a surplice for a gown, first at weekly lectures, then in preaching on Sundays, and other like wiles, are recommended as important movements to timid clergymen willing cautiously to gain over timorous Protestants. Is it indispensable to the Catholicizing of England that the open manliness of the English character should be abandoned as well as the faith of the English Church?

Immediate
evil effects
of the
Catholi-
cizing
movement.

We might think it no marvel that men under Socinian or Pantheistic influences should treat as “mere historical landmarks of the faith of the Church at a given time,” and as incompetent, “by the very nature of the case, to bind thoughts and consciences,” the Articles of the English Church, which assert in explicit and decided language the great doctrines of the Bible. We might also think it no marvel that men who desire to root out from our Church the principles of the Reformation, should regard those Thirty-nine Articles as “forty stripes, save one, laid on the shoulders of the Anglican Clergy”; as a “standing protest against everything Roman,” which indeed they are, but never more Catholic than when they are Protestant; and as “containing statements verbally false, and others that are very difficult to reconcile with truth.” What is a marvel to a mind unsophisticated by polemical zeal is, that the writers of such words, men of mark, men who in daily life would scorn a falsehood or a subterfuge, should be men who have voluntarily declared those Articles to be agreeable to the Word of God, and who, on the faith of their subscription, have been entrusted with immortal souls, with the preaching of those very doctrines, and with stations which give to a teacher influence and honour; and that such men should still retain the trust. Is it that the end sanctifies the means, or that in polemics, as in war, all is fair?

But bold avowals do not always imply internal confidence. One who had himself been misled thus describes his experience: “Not one of us but must own it; not one of us but has writhed under the torture of doubting whether, on the threshold of a system which he embraces to make him holy, rests not the stain and semblance of a lie. Oh! it is agony to have seen such things,—setting the seals of falsehood on foreheads once open and pure.” Such feelings are, I trust, still common. Integrity of subscription is of vital moment to us. Our Church has confidence in the honour of her ministers; and does not rely for the purity of their teaching on inquisitorial and arbitrary power. If her confidence should prove largely misplaced, her fall will be at hand. But hitherto there has been little cause why we should be dissatisfied with the results of her generous policy. Among more than 20,000 clergymen, some doubtless fail to rise to a sense of the sacredness of their office; some are even unsound in the faith; but in every diocese such men could easily be counted. Fully alive to all existing evils, I yet can honestly declare that in my judgment Christendom has never known a body of clergy sounder in faith, and more true to their trust, than the present clergy of the English Church. Our want of discipline is often regretted; but, my brethren, the fact that you are practically subject to no coercive power, and that you are independent of the people as regards your emolu-
Misgivings
of Roman-
izing Ra-
tionalists.

ments, causes it to be felt that if you are earnest, devout, orthodox, it is from conviction and the fear of God, not from sordid interest or the fear of man. There is not one of you, I trust, whose heart does not go with the words of Chillingworth, when, after a long mental conflict and sore temptation, he refuses preferment, which he desired, and wrote thus : “ I think myself happy that it pleased God, after I was resolved to enter upon a subscription without a full assurance of the lawfulness of it, to cast in my way two impediments to divert me from accomplishing my resolution. For I profess to you, since I entertained it, I have never enjoyed quiet day and night till now that I have rid myself of it again ; and I plainly perceive that, had I swallowed the pill, however gilded over with glosses and reservations, and wrapt up in conserves of good intentions and purposes, yet it would never have agreed nor stayed with me, whatever preferment I should have gained with it as the wages of unrighteousness. I thank God I am now so resolved, that I will never do that, while living and in health, which I would not do if I were dying. And this I am sure I would never do : I would never do anything for preferment that I would not do but for preferment.” Doubtless it must be a painful thing for an earnest man to abandon the ministry in such a Church as ours ; and it is not every doubt that should at once determine a minister to abandon it. You all feel, however, I am sure, that as

regards a man's self, conscience had better err on the side of honour than on the side of interest. But you feel, too, that in judging of others we must be less severe. Who can tell how far honest self-delusion can extend? Before his Master our brother must stand or fall.

It has been alleged that the change made two years ago in the form of clerical subscription, permits the retention of office in the Church by persons who deny her teaching to an indefinite extent. We are called upon, forsooth, now to declare our assent to the doctrine, and not to the doctrines, of the Church; as if doctrine were not the aggregate of doctrines. In one respect the change effected was an improvement; in other respects it was, I fear, not happy. It confounds the special characteristics of a Liturgy and of Articles of Religion. It is open to difficulties and evasions which were not found in the words prescribed in the Thirty-sixth Canon. It is open to other evasions than the evasions of those who do not hold the great truths of the faith. Few, however, will believe that the change amounted to a Parliamentary absolution of past dishonesty, or to a Parliamentary license for future dishonesty. Admit, if you will, that a loophole for evasion was made, does it follow that the moral or legal position of a clergyman, in regard of his obligations as a teacher, has changed. It has not legally changed; for the question which would be tried in a court on

Change in
the form of
subscription in 1865.

a charge of false doctrine, would not be the extent to which subscription binds ; but whether the accused had depraved the Liturgy, or gainsaid any proposition in the Articles. It has not morally changed ; for surely each of you would think himself a wretched caitiff, whether he had been called upon to subscribe or not, if he ate the bread of a Church whose doctrines he did not hold ; or conducted services in which he could not honestly and heartily join. It is sometimes pleaded by the defenders of laxity in subscription, that our Church is comprehensive. Our Church is indeed comprehensive ; not, however, because she would include those who disbelieve her doctrines, but because she imposes on her people nothing as necessary to salvation which is not warranted by the Word of God. She is just as comprehensive as Holy Scripture. I would not deny that men who take parts of the Articles differently may be equally honest, if only they are convinced that their sense is the sense in which the Articles were intended to be taken. Charity may thus think even of men who avowedly subscribe in a non-natural sense ; or of men who treat a Creed as obsolete, and as subject to their own verifying faculty ; and would not rashly press them to take the step which consistency would enjoin. We can ill afford to lose learning, eloquence, energy, devoutness ! And yet soundness in the faith is more precious than learning, eloquence, energy, devoutness ; and,

after all, it is rather the perversion of seceders, than the secession of perverts, which is to be deplored.

Grievous it is that, in the face of the evils which are coming upon the earth, Churches, like the furious zealots who were massacring each other in the Temple of Jerusalem while the Roman was scaling the walls, should be engaged in worse than internecine wars. Why not rather fight the good fight of faith, though it may not be side by side, in defence of religion and society? Why not rather provoke each other to love and to good works, and gain converts from heathens and infidels; or, if from each other, only by more faithful manifestation of the truth? Why not rely upon His providence who loves the Church better than we do, since He bought it with His own blood, to mark out the time and to point out the paths in which, if a re-union is to take place before the restoration of all things, it may be effected without producing greater evils than separation now produces?

Rome "ever has double," as Dean Brevint wrote, On the part of the Church of Rome. "what the Church of Christ still hath single and of different sorts; keeping in her bosom as much of good and bad together as can fitly furnish true Catholics with the fundamentals of Christianity, and lend to others whereon to build whole heaps of ruinous superstitions and abuses." Why does not Rome, then, in lieu of aggravating the latter, by which she influences only the weak, rather urge

Folly of divisions in the Church, and of divisions for the sake of re-union.

with more and more earnestness the eternal truths which can act on strong and vigorous intellects ? Thus did her great Gallican preachers, who knew that eloquence can find no materials in the miserable accretions which deformed their faith ; and relied, in doing their noble work, on the sublime message of God, and on the eternal laws which His voice proclaimed from the holy mountain.

Pity it is that Nonconformists, who, though it may be cankered, like other bodies, by a spreading neologianism, yet love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and hold the cardinal doctrines of the Bible, should be intent on destroying a branch of Christ's Church which they can never replace. They cannot by themselves ward off the assaults either of Rome or of unbelief. Their policy is a short-sighted policy as regards themselves. It is a dangerous policy as regards our common country and our common Christianity. If their antagonism in some respects benefits us, it is for them power, consideration, and a safeguard. Our downfall will be their downfall ; for the Church of England is not only the Church of their fathers, possibly to be the Church of their sons ; but it is their own Church, too, far more than they think. Our divines are their divines, our ministers their ministers, our children in the faith often their best converts, our tolerant spirit their best preventive against a narrow spirit. But they have a work of their own to do. They can reach classes which we cannot reach.

They will surely preach with more effect the great saving truths which they love, if they will abandon their confederacy with our common foes, and with us seek by those eternal truths to save men and society.

But more grievous pity it is that sons of the ^{On the part of the Church of England.} Church of England, that ministers of the Church of England, should be engaged in that which, whether it succeed, or whether it fail, must rend and dishonour their mother. The road to union is, they seem to think, to be through disunion, as Peace Congresses seek for universal peace through universal war. Well might minds love and honour her which unite profound submission to God's Word with veneration for primitive order. The Church of England, more than any Church, is linked by all the links and evidences of kindred to the Apostolic Churches and to Christ ; by succession of ministers and inheritance of doctrine ; by the same worship, and the same exclusive worship, of God ; by the same reliance for pardon, and the same exclusive reliance for pardon, on the sacrifice of the cross ; by the same faith, and the same exclusive faith, in the word spoken by the Holy Ghost. The Church of England, by her adherence to that word, can be tolerant, and yet faithful to the truth. She commissions the ambassadors of Christ to preach the whole counsel of God, yet imposes no terms of communion on her people, but faith in that which is held by the whole Church of

Christ. She permits freedom of inquiry, and possesses, therefore, the most intelligent, yet the most orthodox, clergy in the world. It is not blind affection which makes me wonder that some of those who should love her best for what she is, and who could serve her well, are hankering after a corrupt Church, or led astray by a philosophy falsely so called, which logically leads to infidelity. Why is this? Is it that Christians can be as averse to the majestic purity of Scriptural truth, as were the Israelites, when "they turned their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass," to the subline dogma of the unity of God which belonged to them alone of all the nations on the face of the earth?

Individual perversions our internal agitations may produce; but, as I have before observed, if the faith of the Church of England be generally abandoned, it will not be for Romanism. Rome rests on three fundamental principles; on her infallibility, which virtually supersedes the authority of the Holy Ghost; on her sacrifice of the Mass, in which the priest has power, as they speak, over the natural body of Christ, and which virtually supersedes the sacrifice on the Cross; and on her confessional, in which the priest has power, as they speak, over the mystical body, that is, over the people, of Christ, and which virtually supersedes the Throne of Grace. These are the principles which, if received, enable priests to dethrone kings;

to brandish the lash over Irish peasants ; to rule in families, and to fill the treasury of the Church. "I can do anything," was wont to say the Père Coton, Confessor to Henry the Fourth of France, "with my God in my hand and my king at my feet." To these principles, or to kindred principles, it is attempted to allure our Church. I cannot believe that the people of England, with Bibles in their hands, will for many a year, if ever, accept either the principles, or the sacerdotal domination, to which they tend.

Be the view, however, taken by others of their duty what it may, our course is clear, if we would be loyal to the Word of God and loyal to our Church. It is to hold firmly, and boldly to preach, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. The Gospel, which once converted the world, can alone again convert and save the world. It is not on compromises with modern or with ancient errors, or on alliances which must imply compromises, or on self-constituted organizations, or on the endless and impotent discussions which teem in times of commotion, that I rely to meet the evils which are coming upon us. My reliance rests, under God, on you, my reverend brethren, and on the sound doctrine by which you are enabled to exhort and to convince. "I charge you therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom ; preach the Word ; be instant in season and

Course to
be taken
by loyal
Church-
men.

out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," though others "turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables." You, my brethren, are the immediate instruments of God for the salvation of souls. To place each of you in your parishes is the purpose of all our ecclesiastical and academical institutions. To your parishes each of you is the Church of England. It is on the faithfulness of each of you, in the appointed path of his duty, that the prosperity of the Church collectively depends. It is in your pulpits, in your due administration of the holy mysteries, in your schools, in your closets, in your studies, in your pastoral visits, in your manifold charities, in your labours of love, in your holy lives, that our strength is found, and that the good fight is to be fought and won. You cannot be too conscious of the influence, for time and for eternity, of every sermon which you preach, of every prayer which you offer up, of every one of your daily actions, of everything in your bearing —nay, in your very dress. All in you is marked, every inconsistency is detected, and every inconsistency is a stumbling-block. To you much is given ; from you much is required. Would that the ministers of Christ could see themselves as the people see them. If you reverence yourselves, you will be reverenced.

But whatever else you may do, and may be, fail you must if you ever forget, that you hold an

office higher than the priestly office which belongs to you only in common with all your brethren ; that you are, above all things, "ambassadors for Christ ; and that to you is given the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Like St. Paul, then, determine to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified ; and like St. Paul, you will approve yourselves as ministers of God. But before a minister can save them that hear him, he must first save himself, as the great Apostle also intimates. It is conviction that carries with it conviction. It is that which comes from the heart that goes to the heart. If Christ crucified "be of God made unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," you will not fail as regards others when you preach Christ crucified the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Preach Christ crucified ! Around the central doctrine of the Atonement will arrange themselves, in their due order and fair proportions, the mysteries of the faith revealed one and all in relation to that truth : the Godhead of the Word made flesh ; the doctrine of the blessed Trinity ; of Sanctification by the Spirit ; of the sacramental institutions of Christ ; and of Justification by Faith, which is the subjective counterpart of the Atonement on the Cross. Preach Christ crucified !

If your people hear, they will be in no danger from rationalistic theories ; for that saving truth rests on the Bible alone, and implies the unquestioning submission of the soul to the authority of the Word of God. Preach Christ crucified ! If your people hear, they will be in no danger of seeking for other mediators than "the High and Everlasting Priest," as our Church speaks, "which hath offered Himself once for all upon the altar of the Cross," who is "the alone Mediator between God and men ; who ever liveth to make intercession for us." Preach Christ crucified ! Your people, if they will hear, constrained by His love, will thenceforth live not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. Preach Christ crucified ! If this Church and country have to go through some fearful catastrophe, you will not only have saved immortal souls, every one of which is of more value than the whole world ; but you will have prepared and hastened the reaction which is sure to follow. God may chastise us sorely ; but it will be in mercy, and for His own ultimate glory. As regards yourselves, if, like St. Paul, you have taught publicly and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ : if, like St. Paul, you have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, and laboured to support the weak ; like St. Paul, come what may, and by whatever sufferings you shall have to glorify God, you will finish your

course with joy, and “fulfil the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Take heed therefore unto yourselves, brethren, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. If grievous wolves are to enter in among you, not sparing the flock ; and if of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them ; it is not to human infallibility or to human devices that you need go for guidance and for strength. I can show you a more excellent way. I can recommend you to all that Paul himself regarded as the safe-guard of his own Ephesian elders ; I can, like him, commend, and do commend you to “God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.”

II.

THE THRONE OF GRACE: NOT THE CONFESSORIAL.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD, ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1846.

*“I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for
Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”*

ISAIAH xliii. 25.

How shall a Christian, who has fallen into sin, obtain pardon and peace? The answer which we give to this momentous question really decides the character of our creed, and ought, if we be honest and consistent, to decide our choice of a communion.

Reply of the
Church of
England.

The Church of England replies, “We are justified by faith only, for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*;” or, as she more largely declares her meaning, in a Homily which is of symbolical authority, “They which, in act or deed, do sin after baptism, when they turn to God unfeignedly, they are likewise washed by this sacrifice from their sins, in such sort that there

* Eleventh Article.

remaineth not any spot of sin that shall be imputed to their damnation.”* “On our part is required true and lively faith”;† a “faith not only that the death of Christ is available for the redemption of all the world, but also that He hath made upon His cross a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing of thy sins, so that thou acknowledgest no other saviour, redeemer, mediator, advocate, intercessor, but Christ only; and that thou mayest say with the Apostle, that He loved thee, and gave Himself for thee. For this is to make Christ thine own, to apply His merits unto thyself. Herein thou needest no other man’s help, no other sacrifice or oblation, no sacrificing priest, no mass, no means established by man’s invention.”‡

The Church of Rome acknowledges that we are Reply of the
Church of
Rome. justified by faith; that all sins, § however light,

* First part of the Homily of Salvation.

† Third part of the Homily of Salvation.

‡ First part of the Sermon on the Sacrament, Second Book of Homilies.

§ “Peccata nostra quamvis levia . . . ipse purgat; et si forte . . . a justitia excidamus, ipse nihilominus propitiatio est pro peccatis nostris.” Bellarmine, *De Pœnit.*, lib. iv. c. 14. On the first occasion on which I have to name Cardinal Bellarmine, I desire to express my respect for the talents and graces of that great man, the ablest defender of Rome against Protestants, the great Bossuet, with all his eloquence, not excepted. In the Romish Church, in the worst of times, holy men have found life and peace, because of the truths which she retains. Let me say, too, that while I venture to oppose the teaching of eminent men of our own day, I am not insensible to the claims which they may have on our reverence and gratitude. What member of the Church of Christ can be unthankful to Dr. Pusey for his wonderful work on the Prophet Daniel?

however grievous, are remitted only through the sacrifice of the Cross ; and that such is the power of contrition, that through it we obtain from God the pardon of all iniquity.

*The answers
fair but de-
ceptive.*

Upon hearing this good confession, some may perhaps exclaim, To what purpose, then, was the Reformation ? Wherefore the long alienation between us and Rome ? How can Churches which speak so harmoniously on this cardinal doctrine of our holy faith, refrain from rushing into each other's arms ? Alas ! he who thus thinks knows not the depths of Satan. Rome never formally denies the truth of God. No, "but she makes it of none effect by her traditions," or "turns it into a lie," because, in her hands, it becomes part of that prodigious delusion which she has been enabled to construct by the genius of her schoolmen, and to substitute for the Gospel of Christ.

*How Rome
makes faith
of none
effect.*

The faith of which she speaks is not that gift of God "whereby we do apprehend and take hold upon His promises touching the free pardon and forgiveness of our sins," as is taught by our Church, who thus excludes all that is human in the justification of man, except godly sorrow, and holy fear, and hatred of sin, and trust, and love, without which graces belief is not faith ; and so secures to God His prerogative, to the cross its glory, to holiness its claims, and to the penitent soul its noble privilege of direct intercourse with the blessed Trinity. The purity of our doctrine

is guarded from all admixture by the statement that we are justified by faith only. Rome is willing to say that we are justified by faith. One word, "only," between us! But that word is an impassable gulf. If she added it, her system must eventually fall. Without it, we shall become an easy prey to the efforts so often made to bring us again under the yoke which God mercifully removed from the neck of our fathers. In Tridentine theology, faith is the beginning of salvation; indispensable doubtless, since without it we should be infidels and incapable of grace; but it is nothing more.*

Again, the Church of Rome teaches indeed that "the sacrifice on the cross was offered by Christ to God the Father, that He might bring in eternal

How Rome makes the sacrifice of Christ of none effect.

* "Fides quæ ad justificationem requiritur, non est fiducia in divinis promissionibus, sed firmus assensus ad ea omnia quæ Deus revelavit."—Council of Trent, *Præfat. Can. xii. sess. vi.*

The following propositions of Quesnel were condemned in the Bull "Unigenitus," by Pope Clement XI., in 1713, as false, blasphemous, and pernicious:—

"Nulli dantur gratiæ, nisi per fidem."

"Fides est prima gratia, et fons aliarum."

"Omnia alia salutis media continentur in fide, tanquam in suo germine et semine."

"Proh! quantum oportet bonis terrenis et sibimet ipsi renuntiasse, ad hoc, ut quis fiduciam habeat sibi, ut ita dicam, appropriandi Christum Jesum, ejus amorem, mortem et mysteria, ut facit Sanctus Paulus dicens: qui dilexit me, et tradidit semet ipsum pro me."

I have known more than one intelligent person make the same mistake as that great king, who, when he first read the too famous Bull Unigenitus, took the condemned propositions for doctrines taught by the Pontiff, and was undeceived only by the elaborate explanations of his confessor.

redemption for us ; and that it remitted all sins, past, present, and to come.” This is well. But she teaches, too, that it does not, *except through certain means,** justify any man, however true his faith, and genuine his repentance ; nay, that being a thing past, and existing only in the mind of God, and having, therefore, no actual being, it is, of itself, totally ineffective ; and would avail us nothing, unless Christ had left to His Church a present sacrifice—the Mass,† in which He, by and

* We also maintain strongly that a mean is necessary to enable each Christian to obtain the fruits of the sacrifice of Christ ; that is, a mean *on our part* : “It remaineth,” says our Church, “that I show to you how to apply Christ’s death and passion to our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds, so that it may work the same effect in us wherefore it is given—namely, the salvation of our souls. For it profiteth nothing to have salve unless it be applied.” “What mean is that? Forsooth, it is faith.”—(The second Sermon of the Passion, Second Book of Hom.) What we deny is the *necessity of a mean on God’s part* ;—above all, the doctrine, blasphemous as it seems to us, that the sacrifice of Christ is of no effect, unless it be applied by the Mass ; and that sin against God is remitted, not by God directly, but only by His earthly deputy.

“Sacramentum crucis non efficienter et immediate justificavit.” “Quod non est in re non potest efficienter operari. Sacrificium crucis modo non est in re, sed solum in mente Dei, proinde non operatur efficienter.—Sic etiam sacrificium missæ non justificat homines immediate, sed impetrat, ut ex merito sacrificii crucis detur hominibus gratia, et donum poenitentiae.”—Bellarmine, *De Missa*, lib. iv. c. 4.

The notion that a continuous or repeated sacrifice is needed to give efficacy to Christ’s intercession, involves the error of attributing to the Divine mind those distinctions of time which are necessary conditions of human thought. The sacrifice on the cross to us is a past fact, to the Eternal Mind it is an ever-present truth.

† “Quia per mortem sacerdotium ejus extinguendum non erat, in coena novissima . . . ut dilectæ suæ sponsæ Ecclesiæ visibile (sicut hominum natura requirit) relinquaret sacrificium quo . . . illius

in His priest, offers that very body in which He suffered on the cross ; a sacrifice unbloody, indeed, but a sacrifice which truly appeases the wrath of God for the sins which are committed each day, and through which alone the fruits of the sacrifice on Calvary are applied to us. Unless Christ have this continual sacrifice to offer, He cannot intercede for us as a priest* ; He can, at the utmost, pray for us as a layman can. "In hoc mysterio," concludes a grave authority, "tota mundi salus consistit."† This is painful to hear, but it is logical. The doctrine of justification by faith only is the counterpart of the doctrine of the atonement. They stand or fall together. Deny the former,—

salutaris virtus in remissionem eorum quæ a nobis quotidie committuntur peccatorum applicaretur."—(*Concil. Trid. Sess. Sext., cap. i.*) "In hoc divino sacrificio quod in missa peragitur idem ille Christus continetur, et incruente immolatur. Hujus quippe oblatione placatus Dominus, gratiam et donum poenitentiae concedens crimina etiam gravia dimittit. Una enim eademque est hostia."—(*Cap. ii.*)

"Dans l'Eucharistie le Sauveur continue d'aimer les hommes jusqu'à la passion, jusqu'à la folie ; il continue de leur pardonner et de demander grâce pour eux : là aussi il continue de souffrir sans se plaindre . . . C'est une incarnation réitérée plus hautement que la première."—(Gaume, vol. iv. pp. 416, 417 : a work rewarded by the late Pope, recommended by nine prelates, and generally used by the French clergy as a Manual for Catechising.)

* "Si volunt adversarii Christum intercedere per solam orationem, non habent inde illum esse proprie saecrdotem : nam quilibet homo quamvis laicus potest pro alio per orationem intercedere. Si vero illum contendunt ut sacerdotem intercedere, id est, mediante oblatione victimæ, tum necesse est Christum semper offerre et proinde Eucharistiam sacrificium esse."—(Bell., *De Euch.*, lib. v. c. 6.)

† Odo, Abbot of Cluny, *Opusc.*, ii. c. 68, quoted by Gaume.

you cannot hold that Christ made on the cross a full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ; and His death remains one cause indeed of salvation, but practically the least important. Deny the latter,—and the crucified may be to you a hero, a philanthropist, and an example, but not a Saviour.

How Rome makes the Mass, too, of little effect.

But, even after Christ has been immolated on ten thousand altars in a single day ; after He has as often appeased His angered Father, and as often appeared before Him in heaven with His precious offering, not even one sin has been done away in behalf of any of the penitents prostrate at His feet. Mass is powerless in regard of remission of sin. All that it effects is to obtain for those now in the world grace and the gift of penitence from God, who by sacramental penance is reconciled to each of us, as He was to our race, as a whole, when Christ died ; and Mass is, of itself, as incapable of yielding pardon and peace as the atonement on the cross. The grace and the repentance which it procures do not suffice for this ; because Christ has said to His ministers, “ Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted ” ; if, therefore, through other channels than those ministers man can obtain pardon, “ the words of the Son of God have no meaning, they are illusive, they are a lie.”* It is the absolving act of the Priest, not the death of Christ upon the cross, which corresponds to the sin-offerings of the

* Gaume, *Catéchisme de la Persévérance*, vol. i. p. 209.

Old Testament.* It is the sacrifice which the Priest offers, it is the remission which he pronounces, that renders the work of Christ effectual. Without the Priest, therefore, no sin is forgiven, no soul is saved, unless God see fit to depart from the order which His wisdom has appointed.†

We are impressed with the holy severity of Rome, when she assures us, “that contrition, so deep as that the bitterness of our grief should be equal to the heinousness of our sins, surpassing the pleasure which we found in committing them,” and involving hatred of sin and love of God, is a material part of the sacrament of penance. Our next thought, however, is one of perplexity, when we remember that in the place‡ “where her seat is,” the mercenary

How Rome
makes con-
trition of
none effect.

* This may be true if the sin-offerings of the law are considered as atoning only for sins legal and typical, and the absolution of the Church, under the new covenant, refers only to the removal of the censures under which her discipline had laid the penitent; and if under both dispensations sins against God can be forgiven by Him alone, and by virtue of that precious atonement which Christ alone could make. David regarded all sacrifice as useless for such offences as his, except the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart.

† Those who may be desirous of clearly comprehending “the depth and mystery” of the Roman Mass, may study, with pleasure and advantage, the work of Dean Brevint bearing that title—a work recommended in the highest terms by Dr. Waterland.

‡ “All possible means are employed, and not merely moral influences, to compel all the inhabitants of the country to yield implicit obedience to the law. For this purpose the clergy go from house to house at Easter, and take down the names of all the inhabitants. When a person has fulfilled the duty of Easter confession and communion, he receives a certificate and attestation of the fact; these certificates are collected after Easter, in order to furnish a means of ecclesiastical police, and to know who have, and who have not, yielded obedience to the law and the Church.”—*Rome: its*

assassin, the professional bandit, the open adulteress, who among us would shrink from the Lord's table, appear, once a-year at least, in the confessional, receive absolution, partake of the body of Christ; and then return to those guilty courses which are interrupted only by the fixed season of repentance.* The Roman Catechism removes our surprise.* “Since few can arrive at this height of contrition, and, in consequence, few can hope for the pardon of their sins this way, it was necessary that God should devise means for the general salvation of men; which he has effected, by an admirable counsel, in giving the keys of the kingdom of Heaven to the Church. Though our sorrow be not so great as to be enough to obtain pardon, yet, by the power of the keys, all our wickedness and sin will be forgiven if we confess them unto the priest.” In short, Rome teaches that though contrition, or the deepest and most sincere repentance, is of itself sufficient only if the priest cannot be had; and then, only because “the contrites intend and desire absolution †;” yet, that attrition, or imperfect

Ecclesiastical and Social life, p. 83: a very interesting little work, by a German of candid and inquiring mind, whom his translator represents as belonging to “the New Puseyite German School.”

* *Catechismus Romanus*, § 37.

† This expression is Hooker's, *Ecc. Pol.*, vi. c. 6, 13, who quotes Soto, *Sent.* iv. Dist. xiv. 9, art. 1.

“In nova lege contritio haberri nequit sine voto præfato (*i.e.* sacramenti pœnitentiæ); decrevit enim Deus, nemini dare gratiam perfectæ contritionis nisi simul ei inspiret illud votum, ita ut illa necessitas non tam ex natura rei quam ex voluntate Dei positiva proveniat.”—Dens, vol. vi. p. 23.

repentance, conceived from consideration of the turpitude of sin,* and the fear of hell, if it exclude the present will to sin, and be accompanied with the hope of pardon ; nay (as some of her greatest divines have taught with almost universal approbation), mere terror, like that of a slave† cowering under the lash, prepares the mind for grace to be received by absolution ; and thus is sufficient to save with absolution, but insufficient without it. So that, of two men on a battle-field in the self-same frame of mind,‡ the one who has heard “the omnipotent words,” shall enter into the joy of his Lord ; the other, who expires before the priest can reach him, shall be cast into everlasting fire. Thus is penitence made easy, for who, in the course of the most depraved life, does not occasionally, nay, at

* Council of Trent, sess. xiv. c. 4.

† “Melchior Canus, Victoris et Soti sententiam secutus, eam extendit ad attritionem mere servilem sic cognitam. Melchioris sententia vix nata scholas omnes pervasit.”—Pope Benedict XIV. *de Synodo*, lib. vii. c. 13. The following proposition, voted by the Synod of Pistoia, was condemned in 1794 by Pius VI. in the Bull “Auctorem fidei.”—“Supposititias conversiones quæ fiunt per attritionem nec efficaces esse solere, nec durabiles. Consequenter, pastorem animarum debere insistere signis non aequivocis caritatis dominantis antequam admittat suos poenitentes ad sacramenta, quæ signa pastor elicere poterit ex stabili cessatione a peccato, et fervore in operibus bonis,”—as “rash, false, calculated to disturb the quiet of souls, and contrary to the safe and approved practice of the Church.” The proposition, “Si solus supplicii timor animat poenitentiam, quo hæc est magis violenta, eo magis ducit ad desperationem,” is condemned in the Bull “Unigenitus.”

‡ “Si non essent sacerdotes judices ac vere peccata remitterent nemo periret ex eo solum quod sacerdotem reconciliantem habere non posset.”—Bellarmine, *De Pœnit.*, lib. iii. c. 2.

all times, unless he be actually in the orgasm of sin, detest wickedness as such, and tremble as he thinks of the terrors of God ? Who but a hardened infidel, or a brutal reprobate, is without such feelings when death is at his side ? Who but such an one wholly casts off the hope of pardon ? Whose conscience then may not easily bear him witness that he has the required dispositions ; and who can despair of being finally saved, if only a priest is to be found ?

The Papal divines hold that one drop of the blood of Christ was a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and that “ He reconciles us to His Father, even if we die in sin and fall from Him and become enemies, yea, seventy times seven times ”* in a day. But though this most ample price has been paid on Calvary, and is paid, again and again, every hour, in the Mass, and His priests are enabled in consequence to pronounce absolution to penitents day after day, if they will, and to deliver them from eternal death ; yet there remains a punishment for which He has not satisfied, and which even the Priest cannot remit—a punishment which is the very anguish of the damned,† endless

* These words are Bellarmine’s.

† “ Ut recte explicat Card. Caiet., poena illa quæ restat luenda post poenæ remissionem est illa poena sensus, quam in Gehenna pati debuisset peccator, remota solum æternitate.”—Bellar., *De Pœnit.*, lib. iv. c. 1.

“ Non semper remittitur tota poena temporalis luenda hic vel in altero sæculo, sive in purgatorio. Hoc secundum responsionis punctum impugnant sectarii, eo quod continet fundamentum admittendi purgatorium, indulgentias, et opera satisfactoria.”—Dens, vol. vi. p. 40.

duration excepted. That fearful anguish it is, however, in the power of men to buy off* now, by enduring pain, and living laborious days, by alms, by fastings, by tears, by prayers, by the shirt of hair, by the scourge ; and so, to satisfy a God who, it seems, remits ten thousand talents, yet exacts the remaining farthings of the debt. If, on the other hand, a Christian have committed but one mortal sin since his baptism, and been fully pardoned that one sin, but have not paid the temporary penalty, the sufferings of hell await him for a time of indefinite duration.

But when we remember that every deed, every word, every thought, which can be classed under one of these seven comprehensive heads—pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth—is, in the language of Rome, a deadly sin ; and how often, therefore, the holiest believer provokes the wrath of God ; are we not ready to think that even the holiest believer can never pay adequate penalties,—no, not though his head were a fountain of tears,—no, not though he gave all his goods to feed the poor,—no, not though he yielded his body to be burned,—no, not though, like Paul, he passed his life in weariness and painfulness, in watchings

Rome, however, makes satisfaction easy, though she speaks sternly.

* Satisfactions are “*ex pacto et acceptatione*,” by bargain and agreement, as Bellarmine says.—*De Pœnit.*, lib. iv. c. 1. B.

The following proposition was condemned by Pope Pius V. in the Bull “*Ex omnibus afflictionibus*” :—“*Solutio pœnæ temporalis quæ peccato dimisso saepe remanet, et corporis resurrectio proprie non nisi meritis Christi adscribenda est.*”

often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness ? How is it, then, we ask with wonder, that, in countries under the Papal yoke, men with such a faith, and under such a discipline, can eat, drink, marry and be given in marriage, live at ease and in pleasure all their life long, yet think themselves good Christians all the while ; or can, even after full absolution, die in joy and peace ?

By her
casuistry
and doctrine
of venial sin.

It is because Rome seeks to retain under her sway the self-indulgent as well as the austere ; and that, according to her received principles, misdeeds may be rife, yet mortal sins be rare. To constitute a deadly sin,* according to her casuists, three conditions are required. It must be committed advertently, that is, with attention to the act done, and consciousness of its guilt ; secondly, with a perfect consent of the will ; and, thirdly, in a matter of moment. It must in fact be an open act of rebellion against God, a formal refusal to obey. Thus, it would seem that murder committed under frantic rage, the indulgence of lust by one who has

* “Trois choses sont nécessaires pour le péché mortel, l'advertisance, le consentement, et la matière grave. L'advertisance a pour objet, non l'action en elle-même, mais sa bonté ou sa malice. Pour commettre un péché mortel, le consentement parfait de la volonté est nécessaire. Il faut que le précepte qu'on transgresse soit grave, et connu pour tel. Le péché mortel est une révolte contre Dieu. Voilà l'être qui ose se mesurer avec le Tout-Puissant. Voyez avec quelle insolente fierté il prononce contre Dieu ses blasphèmes,—‘Moi, je ne vous obéirai pas ; je me moque de vos lois, de vos promesses, et de vos menaces ; je veux penser, aimer, faire ce que je voudrai, vivre comme je l'entendrai.’”—Gaume, vol. iv. pp. 331-333.

at the time no thought of God or duty, the petty peculations of servants, are, for different causes, only venial sins: that is, "sins, which are imperfectly such, so called in a modified sense, done beside, rather than against, the law,"* and which, therefore, scarcely deserve the name. Such sins can, by a good thought, the aspersion of holy water, presence at the Mass, Holy Communion, and many other means, be wiped away; and their temporary penalties removed by some slight penance. At any rate, a fast perhaps, or two, certain repetitions of the Lord's Prayer, or a dole of alms, is all that he who judges in the place of Christ commonly requires in the way of compensation.

Moreover, though God demands full satisfaction, ^{By indulgences.} it matters not by whom He is paid; so penances may be discharged by others in our behalf; or we can, at little cost, procure the transfer to our account of a portion of the vast accumulation of superfluous merits, gained by Christ, His mother, and His saints, and placed to a certain extent at the disposal of every prelate, entirely at the disposal of the Pope. Thus sinners are enabled not only to satisfy God fully, but even to put Him in their

* This is Bellarmine's definition. The great secret in Jesuit casuistry is to direct the intention. Thus, to kill an adversary in a duel is lawful, "non ut malum pro malo reddat, sed ut conservet honorem," says Father Reginaldus; "and even to assassinate him," says Father Sanchez, "for thus you avoid exposing your own life, and sharing in the sin of your enemy in a duel."—*Theologia Mont.*, p. 2, c. 39, n. 7.

debt ; and to merit, like Christ, grace and glory for themselves or others. So provision is made for frailer men as well as for souls naturally austere, or corroded by remorse, which scorn a cheap atonement, and feel a stern pleasure in suffering. Rome finds in such penitents replies to accusations of laxity, and the means of impressing vulgar minds which deem self-denial and bodily mortification something superhuman, forgetting that the Fakir and the Santon* inflict on themselves pain as deep as the most rigid of the ascetics of Rome ever bore.

* “J'ai oublié de vous dire qu'en sortant du vieux chateau de Tanger, j'avais aperçu, sous la voûte d'une porte, trois Saints Mahométans. C'est une espèce d'hommes qui, à force d'austérités, s'attirent la vénération des enfans du Prophète : on les appelle ici des Santons. Le triomphe de la volonté sur les penchants du corps m'inspire plus d'admiration chez les Chrétiens que chez les Mahométans. Pourquoi ? Le Sacrifice est le même, la difficulté vaincue est la même ; le moyen, le but du triomphe sont les mêmes ; mais je juge autrement, ou plutôt je ne juge pas, je préjuge, et je ne veux pas devenir équitable. J'aurais peur de penser autre chose que ce que je crois ; cette crainte est un tort de mon esprit. Corrigez-moi si vous pouvez, sans me rendre pire que je suis. Au reste, chez les Maures, comme chez certains pénitents Chrétiens, la vermine paraît être devenue un des attributs de la perfection religieuse : un saint Mahométan de Tanger est aussi sale pour le moins que l'était le bienheureux Labre. Tous ces rapports, qui existent entre deux religions ennemis font naître des doutes aussi difficiles à résoudre qu'effrayants à sonder. Si les vertus des saints ne prouvent plus la vérité de leur religion, sur quoi baserons-nous notre foi, et par quoi refuterons nous les croyances contraires à cette foi ? Dieu sait que l'expression du doute que je hasarde ici m'est arrachée comme un cri de douleur. La vie intellectuelle de l'homme civilisé par la philosophie, ressemble à une longue opération, pendant laquelle le raisonnement ne cesse de travailler à extirper la foi. Et le succès d'une telle opération c'est la mort.”—*L'Espagne sous Ferdinand VII.*, Lettre xlvii., par le Marquis de Custine (a zealous Romanist).

Our* conscience testifies to the truth of the Psalmist's words, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" and, "My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head." Yet Rome expects from her subjects a full revelation of all the sins of the year, with all their circumstances; for though it be not necessary to confess venial offences, yet the appointed judge alone can finally determine what are venial and what mortal sins; and one mortal sin kept back is enough to cast the austerest penitent into perdition. But how can the memory of the most scrupulous penitent, how can the attention of the most zealous confessor, how can a few brief hours, suffice for such a task? Be not alarmed. The access of the priest to the soul being secured, special confession is found not to be indispensable; and what in controversy is conveniently treated as an absurdity, namely, that the spiritual physician can heal unknown diseases, and the spiritual judge pass sentence on unknown crimes, is in this case freely admitted; and, besides, extreme unction is there, which has little to do but to wipe away those deadly sins which have been forgotten.

The whole system of Rome, then, hangs on her doctrine as to post-baptismal sin; her Masses, those "dangerous deceits"; her sacrament of penance, so

By making
confession
easy.

The power
and wealth
of Rome due
to her doc-
trine of post-
baptismal
sin.

* This paragraph, and many others, were omitted on preaching, in order to bring the sermon within the usual length of University discourses. In the revisal, verbal corrections and some additions have been made, and two paragraphs have been recast, chiefly for the sake of greater clearness, and to meet objections.

well fitted to destroy souls ; her indulgences, too often shameful frauds ; her purgatory, in which God punishes His saved children ; her wretched casuistry. But that unholy doctrine will never be abandoned ; for through it she secures, if men believe at all, her domination and her wealth, and deep veneration and cheerful obedience to her ministers. If her teaching, however, on this point, be of God, her pretensions in their behalf are those of soberness and truth, though they be couched in such words as these, which a Pope rewarded, and many prelates sanctioned, but a few years since :

“ Order conveys a two-fold power to the priest—first, on the natural, secondly, on the mystical body of Christ. So that there is a man who, every day, when it pleaseth him, opens the gates of heaven ; and addressing the Son of the Eternal, the Monarch of the worlds, saith, Descend from Thy throne ! Come. Obedient to the voice of man, the Word of God, by whom all things were made, leaves that moment the mansions of glory, and is made flesh in the hands of that man more mighty than kings, than angels, than the august Mary ; and that man saith to Him, ‘ Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee,’ ‘ Thou art my victim ;’ and He sufferereth Himself to be immolated by that man, to be laid where he will, to be given to whom he will. That man is the priest.

“ The priest is omnipotent, not only in heaven, and over the natural body of the God-man ; he is

omnipotent also upon earth, and over the mystical body of Jesus Christ. See : a man hath fallen into the bonds of Satan ; what power shall be mighty to deliver him ? Call to the aid of that unhappy being Angels and Archangels, Michael himself, the prince of the host of heaven, the conqueror of Satan and of his revolted legions. The holy Archangel will indeed be able to chase away the fiends who besiege this unhappy man—but the demon who is in his heart, never ; never can he break the chains of the sinner who hath put his trust in him. To whom, then, will you apply to deliver him ? Call on Mary, the mother of God, the queen of angels and of men, the terror of hell, she can indeed pray for that soul, but she cannot absolve it of a single fault, small as it may be. The priest can.

“ Nay, more ; suppose the Redeemer in person to descend visibly into a church, and to place Himself in one confessional in order to administer the Sacrament of Penance, while a priest takes his seat in another. The Son of God says, *I absolve thee* ; the priest also says, *I absolve thee* : by the one and by the other is the penitent equally absolved. Thus the priest, mighty as God, can in one moment snatch the sinner from hell, and render him worthy of Paradise, and from a slave of the devil make him a son of Abraham ; and God Himself is bound to adhere to the judgment of the priest, to grant or to refuse His pardon, according as the priest

grants or refuses absolution, provided the penitent be worthy. The sentence of the priest precedes, God hath only to set His hand thereto.”*

Yes, Rome has glorified herself; and, in the person of the meanest of her priests, “exalteth herself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God.” But she has compassed her greatness at an awful price. She is great and powerful, because she has invaded the prerogative of that jealous God who alone can forgive sin, degraded His Christ, made the Cross of none effect, perverted the Gospel, disarmed the law of its terrors, and debased the noblest works of the Christian; and all by her fatal theory as to the remission of post-baptismal sin.

Rome de-
bases good
works.

Is the last assertion—namely, that she has debased the noblest works of the Christian—unwarranted? Judge ye, when ye hear the words of one who, not being of us, to his honour went out from us;—a man too subtle not to perceive, too bold not to avow, the consequences of his principles; and who delights, accordingly, to own and to justify almost all that former apologists of his Church have evaded, extenuated, or denied. “The ordinary measures of charity,” he says, “which Christians possess, suffice for securing such respectable attention to religious duties as the routine

* The passage above is extracted from Gaume, vol. iv., pp. 309-311.

necessities of the Church require. But if we would raise an army of devoted men to resist the world, to oppose sin, to relieve misery, or to propagate the truth, we must be provided with motives which keenly affect the many. Christian love is too rare a gift, philanthropy is too weak a material for the occasion. Nor is there any influence to suit our purpose besides this solemn conviction which arises out of the very elements of Christian theology—this sense of the awfulness of post-baptismal sin. It is in vain to look out for missionaries to China or Africa, or evangelists for our great towns, or Christian attendants on the sick, on such a scale of numbers as the case requires, without the doctrine of Purgatory. Thus the sins of youth are turned to profitable account by the penances of manhood.”*

“Woe unto you,” said the Lord to men who in their generation were zealous too in gaining proselytes, rigorous in their fasts, constant in prayer, and large in their alms—“Woe unto you ! for ye pass over the love of God.”† Who can refrain from comparing the only motives which are represented as being at once practically available and strong enough to enable the Church of Rome

Contrast
between
the motives
which Rome
praises and
the motives
of St. Paul.

* Newman, *Essay on Development*, p. 423.

† The following propositions are condemned in the Bull “*Unigenitus*” :

“*Sola Charitas Christiano modo facit (actiones Christianas) per relationem ad Deum, et Jesum Christum.*”

“*Deus non coronat, nisi charitatem ; qui currit ex alio impulsu, et ex alio motivo, in vanum currit.*”

to extend her kingdom, and to destroy the works of the devil, with the motives of one who had once been a blasphemer and injurious, the chief of sinners ; and yet was, when he wrote, in no whit behind the very chiefest apostles, and in labours more abundant ? “ The love of Christ,” he says, “ constraineth us ; because we judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead. And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them.”*

Summary
of Romish
answers.

The answer, then, which a doctor of the Romish Church, opposed to the Jansenist school, would give to the question, “ How is a Christian to be restored to God’s favour when he has fallen into sin after baptism ? ” might perhaps be in these terms—Sins are either excusable sins, or deadly sins. Excusable sins scarcely deserve the name, do not forfeit the grace of God, and are easily wiped off without external aid ; and excusable sins are such as work but little evil, trifling thefts, for instance, petty falsehoods, vain words ; sins also, however great, which are committed without complete concurrence of the will, and without a full advertence of the mind to their guilt. But deadly sins, too, that is, sins which imply deliberate rebellion against God, and extinguish grace, are pardoned by God in and by the priest, if the sinner be full of sorrow for his guilt, and love God truly ; and, in case of necessity,

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

without the priest, provided there exists in the penitent a longing for sacramental absolution. But as few men can arrive at so blessed a frame of mind, the worst sins also are pardoned, though only through sacerdotal absolution, if the sinner but retain his belief in revelation and the fear of hell. However, men pardoned and restored to the favour of God have yet to endure a punishment as fearful as the punishment of the lost, though not, like it, eternal; but a punishment which, being of the nature of a debt to God, may therefore be paid on behalf of the sinner in purse or person, here or hereafter, by himself or by another, by works of mercy, by mortifications, by prayers, by masses, by indulgences, by the aid of the Virgin Mary, and many other means.

I have no intention fully to consider this system. Reason for explaining the Romish system. My object is only to bring out the similarity which exists between it and another lately propounded in our own Church.

It was to be expected that men, professedly engaged in the attempt to un-protestantize the Church of England, would direct vigorous blows at her Article of Justification by Faith only. But the first efforts were apparently not made in favour of Roman doctrine. Answers as to the pardon of post-baptismal sin lately propounded in the Church of England.

“Baptism,” writes Mr. Newman,* “was lately expounded without the doctrine of penance, and it was accused, by English Churchmen, of Nova-

* *Essay on Development*, p. 101.

tianism.”* Yes; Christians shuddered as they heard such words as these—“We have no account in Scripture of any second remission, obliteration, extinction of all sin, such as is bestowed upon us by the one baptism for the remission of sins.”† “Now there remains only the Baptism of tears; a Baptism obtained, as the same fathers said, with much fasting, and with many prayers.”‡ “If we again sin, there remaineth no more such complete absolution in this life. We must bear the scars of the sins which we have contracted. We must be judged according to our deeds.”§

Second answer. Sin after Baptism pardoned only through public penance and absolution.

It was found necessary to “mitigate this stern doctrine,” or rather to retract “this pestilent and pernicious error,” as the writers of our Homilies|| would have said, in less indulgent, but juster, terms. Our Church was taught by some of her ministers, “that sin after Baptism might indeed be forgiven

* The accusation was unjust to Novatian. Novatian held no such notion as was then broached. “He never denied,” says Bishop Jewel, “but a sinner might confess his sins either secretly to God alone, or publicly and openly before the whole congregation. As for auricular confession to the Priest, for aught that may appear, he never heard of it. But herein stood his whole error, that he thought, whosoever had committed any great notorious sin after baptism, notwithstanding any submission, or satisfaction, he was able to make, yet might be never reconciled unto his brethren, or be received again into the Church; not that he would hereby drive the penitent sorrowful sinner to despair of God’s mercy, but, as some learned men have thought, only for example and terror unto others.”—*Defence of the Apology*, p. 134. ed. 1567.

† *Tracts for the Times*, lxviii. p. 54.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

|| First part of Sermon of Repentance.

upon repentance*; but that repentance involves a penitential discipline, appointed by the Church, and ending in absolution pronounced by her authority"; and, that this is proved both by the testimony of Scripture, and the practice of the primitive Church. This was an extension to all sin of the early practice as to scandalous offences.

In the present day, both these positions seem to have lost favour. It is now proclaimed "that sinners, ulcered, wounded, laden with countless sins, can be so made whole by penitence, as not to have trace or scar of their former wounds†; and that, in compassion to our weakness, the Church admits at once her children to holy communion, "without putting them to open shame, or laying upon them the burden of heavy discipline." This appears a conclusion worthy of all acceptation; but not so the principles on which it is founded, nor their results.

The defect pointed out by a subtle thinker has been remedied. The doctrine of post-baptismal sin is now preached, but not without that of penance; and can be summed up, perhaps, in the following statements.

I find a minister of our Church propounding the same fatal and most gratuitous assumption which

^{1. Apparently sacerdotal mediation.}

* I am indebted for the summary of the scheme (which I cannot verify for myself) to that distinguished prelate Bishop O'Brien, *Primary Charge*, p. 233.

† Chrysostom, *De Pœnit.*, Hom. viii. § 3, quoted by Dr. Pusey, Sermon on "the Entire Absolution of the Penitent," p. 62.

is made by Rome. We are taught that God works His miracles of grace by men, and not by Himself immediately ; and that He bestows the fruits of the Passion through His priests, and through toil and suffering.

2. Apparently atoning sacrifice in the Eucharist.

I do not hear the word Mass ; but I do hear that the living provision left in the Church for the remission of sins is, first, the Holy Eucharist, as a commemorative sacrifice—an unbloody sacrifice, offered for the sins of minister and people to appease God ; to commemorate the same sacrifice that Jesus Christ once offered, with the same intentions that He had, to satisfy the justice of God, and to pay all the debt that a creature owes to His Creator ; that none can do this but Jesus Christ, and that Him, therefore, we offer in His holy Sacrament.

3. Apparently penance.

I do not hear of the Sacrament of Penance ; but I am told of the great authoritative act by which God—who said to His priests, Ye are Gods, giving judgment in the name of God—God, in His priest, forgives the grievous sins of the penitent ; an act which is the channel of grace to the soul. Am I to infer that venial sins are to be healed some other way ?

4. Auricular confession.

I learn that confession, auricular and secret, to the priest, confession as in the Church of Rome, is of excellent use ; and permitted, as well as private absolution, by the Church of England in any case which her ministers shall deem a fit one ;

and that it is open to the Church to enforce it on all.

I learn that the truly contrite, who long for ^{5. Appa-}
absolution, are absolved ; but that great grace is ^{rently}
given by God, through the power of the keys, upon ^{attrition.}
true penitence that but longeth to love.

I learn that the effects of sin are to be washed ^{6. Appa-}
out by sorrow and toil ; that our labour to efface ^{rently}
them may win for us everlasting beauty and glory ; ^{works of}
that the larger favour of the Almighty may be ^{satisfaction.}
gained by suffering for Him ; and that we ought to
make the fasts of the Church penitential ; not,
however, to add bodily discipline of our own mind,
but only in obedience to our guide.*

* The system briefly stated above has been advocated of late by the Rev. Dr. Pusey, in a pamphlet consisting in part of a sermon preached before the University of Oxford. I do not find, in the exposition of his views given by that learned divine, either the transparent simplicity of our own godly Homilies, or the bold explicitness and technical language which render it comparatively easy to comprehend the mysteries of Roman doctrine ; but a vagueness in statement, which baffles the attempt to fix on the writer the sense which he yet seems to convey. I must add, however, that his opinions almost disarm criticism, by the holiness of aspect which even fatal errors assume, as they issue from a tender and devout mind. It may be of use to the reader to subjoin a selection of passages from his preface, his text, his notes and quotations, briefly and connectedly brought together ; a selection which was made with a view to gain, if possible, a definite idea of his doctrine :

“ It may be one of the fruits of the Incarnation, that God would rather work His miracles of grace through man, than immediately by Himself ; and part of the mystery of the Passion, that He would rather bestow its fruits through those who can suffer with us, through toil and suffering.”—p. 45. “ There is not one word in Scripture of our applying *to ourselves* the promises of the Gospel.”—p. 24. They “ who form to themselves theories of remission of sin distinct from

Auricular confession has resulted from these principles.

It is avowed that the exercise of private absolution and confession has arisen among us. Nay, it the provision laid up by God in His Church, do forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns, which hold no water.”—p. 24.

“The Lord has left a living provision in His Church whereby all penitents, however fallen, shall be restored,”—p. 15; “means by which He applies grace,”—p. 3; first, “the holy Eucharist,”—p. 3; “as a commemorative sacrifice,” which we offer “for our sins and for the sins of the people,” “to atone, or appease God, by offering to Him the pure and unbloody sacrifice,” “in order to convey the Body and Blood of Christ to *all* His members”; to “commemorate the same sacrifice which Jesus Christ once offered,” with “the same intentions that He had, to satisfy the justice of God,” “and to pay all the debt which a creature owes to his Creator.” “None can do this effectually but Jesus Christ; Him, therefore, we present to God in this Holy Sacrament.”—p. 4.

Next “the great authoritative act whereby God, in the Church, still forgives the sins of the penitent,”—p. 4; “Absolution, *the* way of healing post-baptismal sin,”—p. 14; “the channel of grace to the soul,”—p. 18. “Consciences are burdened. They look for an act out of themselves. God has provided it. He has provided physicians of the soul to judge and to relieve.”—p. 1. “He said to His priests, Ye are Gods, giving judgment through the name of God.”—p. 47. “As Almighty God chose some created form, in which to appear to man, and what was seen by the patriarch was a created appearance”; “yet He was seen in the flame of fire in the bush, and heard on Mount Sinai, and again descended in a bodily shape like a dove,” and a voice was heard, “This is my beloved Son.” And still man “hath neither heard His voice, nor seen His shape,” so (in all which is performed according to His will) it is He that worketh through His visible instruments.—p. 6.

“Private confession to the Priest is of excellent use.” “We refuse it to none.” “Our Church has encouraged it in certain cases; we must believe that she would recommend it in any other, if need had arisen, when she was free to recommend anything.” “It is a matter of discipline open to the Church to enforce private confession, as now in the Roman Church.” “It is the very remedy for sore existing evil. Such a deep need has arisen in the case of our youth; early confession would, by the blessing of God, have saved the young from sin and misery.”—pp. ix.-xii.

“The Church has always held that he who is really contrite, yea,

was recommended to us,* even to us, but a few months since. This avowal, this recommendation, and the fact that one offender has fallen under Episcopal animadversion, confirm painfully the rumours, incredible as they seemed, that some of the worst practices of Rome have been introduced into our rural parishes, and into more than one of the places of education connected with the Church of England.

Differences of language, and perhaps, I deny it not, differences more important, exist between the system thus sketched, and that of Rome more fully

The Roman
and this
system to be
overthrown
by the same
weapons.

if he had on him the sins of the whole world, and longeth for absolution, is absolved," though "the comfort is withheld, while he knows not where to turn."—p. 53. "Great is the grace which God oftentimes bestows, through the power of the keys, upon true penitence, which loveth, or but longeth to love."—p. 59.

"Grievous sins after Baptism are remitted by absolution."—p. 26. Such a text as 1 John i. 8, 9: "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," relates primarily to sins of infirmity.—Note, p. 20.

"The effects of sin upon the soul may often be to be worked out by sorrow and toil, the forfeited crown and larger favour of Almighty God to be gained by subsequent self-denial, or suffering for Him, or devoted service."—p. 38. "Thy labour to efface thy past foulness shall, through the Blood of Christ, win for thee everlasting grace and beauty."—p. 67. "It is better" for a person "to make the fasts of the Church penitential, rather than to add boldly discipline of his own mind. But it is better of course not to be one's own physician."—p. xx.

"Let those follow easy paths who have ever led blameless lives and little stained their baptismal robes." "But if thou trustest that God has forgiven thee, or will forgive thee much, then seek," &c. &c. "Turn thy self-affliction to the good of thy brethren."—pp. 66, 67.

"God is anew calling aloud to repentance."—p. 65. "The exercise of private confession and absolution has arisen in the need both of the clergy and laity."—p. xvi.

* See Dr. Pusey's "Sermon," &c., "and if any here feel," pp. 58, 59, and Preface, p. xvi.

laid before you. But they are in principle the same; though the former seems inferior to the latter in boldness and consistency. But, be this as it may, certain it is, that they end in the same practical results; and really give the same answer to the question, "How shall a Christian who has fallen into sin obtain pardon and peace?"; that they are alike at variance with the principles of the Church of England; and that an appeal to the Word of God will suffice to overthrow both at once. To Scripture, then, and to the public documents of the Church of England, let us appeal. Both authorities should have weight with those who minister in her sanctuaries. My remarks will refer chiefly to the first assertion. If it falls to the ground, all the others fall with it.

We must premise, however, before we refer to the Word of God, that it would be unjust to assert of the Church of England, that she teaches "that the guilt of having defiled the temple of the Holy Ghost, and crucified the Son of God afresh, may be effaced by a simple act of faith, without deep and searching, because loving, penitence."* Easy forgiveness (that is, pardon declared to men really impenitent) rather characterizes that system which conveys, as from God, the assurance of entire absolution, to one till then, it may be, a stranger, upon an enumeration of his sins, and an act† (which,

Easy for-
giveness
belongs to
Rome.

* See Dr. Pusey's "Sermon," &c., p. 65.

† "La Croix deems it most desirable that confessors should take

in the language of Romish devotion, seems to be a spoken profession) of contrition. The Church of England asserts, that “grief conceived in the heart for the heinousness of sin,” “earnest sorrow that we have offended our most bounteous and merciful God,” “a change of heart,” “a purpose, of ourselves, by God’s grace to renounce our former wicked life, and a full conversion to God in a new life, to glorify His name in all righteousness, and in mortifying our members here upon earth,” are indispensably required, before we can obtain absolution from God. She teaches, that to repent is a good gift of God, which a man cannot have of himself; and so makes us feel that it is a fearful thing, indeed, to sin after we have received the grace of God, and the inspiration of His Spirit; since, either disregard of His will in daily life, or grosser violations of His law, may quench that Spirit, and leave us reprobates: a case in which it is impossible to renew men again unto repentance. We cannot believe, as Romanists do, that a soul may be utterly alienated from God, lose all love, and become spiritually dead, every month, or every day; and every day, and every month, again appease God, by the sacrifice of His Son, and become fit for entire absolution; and, when

care that contrition may be elicited from the penitent; for if the penitent willingly stays on the lowest motives, it is the sign of a mind not sufficiently converted to God. Therefore he *prescribes a certain formula of contrition* from love to God sovereignly good, for the people *to learn and to repeat.*”—Dens, *De Pœnit.*, tom. vi. p. 66. R.

* Homilies of Repentance, *passim*.

once “the omnipotent words” have been spoken, recover all its grace, and love, and life.

The first assertion, as to sacerdotal mediation, considered.

The question before us, then, is, how a Christian, to whom God has given repentance, may be forgiven? We maintain that, in such a case, sin is pardoned “by using that mean which God hath appointed in His Word—the mean of faith, which is the only instrument of salvation now left us—by which we steadfastly behold Christ crucified, and trust to be saved by His death and passion; and to have our sins clean washed away by His most precious blood *;” so that we need no other sacrifice, or priest; and on this point we join issue with Rome, and with some of our brethren. Be our appeal first to Scripture.

Appeal to Scripture.

It cannot be expected that Scripture should directly brand heresies yet unborn. The silence of the New Testament would of itself be sufficient to condemn every notion of sacrifice, or priesthood, properly so called, and other than that of Christ, of which it speaks so largely; and to which it attributes every spiritual blessing bestowed on man. But it is remarkable how pointedly its assertions respecting the work and office of Christ, though directed against the Jewish system, rebut the idea that we have, or need now, any oblation for sin, or propitiation of any kind whatever. Take a few. “Christ, by His own Blood, entered in, once for all, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemp-

* End of the second Sermon of the Passion.

tion for us.”* “If the blood of bulls and of goats sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works? Christ is entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us; nor yet that He should offer Himself often. For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once for all hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Christ was once for all offered to bear the sins of many.† There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Because He continueth for ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able to save, unto the uttermost, them that come to God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. We have an High Priest, who needeth not daily to offer up sacrifice for the sins of the people, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. If He were on earth He would not be a priest.” Against such texts, nothing but the express assertion of the Holy Ghost could make us believe that there is, even now, a bloody or an unbloody sacrifice, in which Christ, by His priest, offers Himself daily for the sins of the people. If any idea had existed, that in the Lord’s Supper the sacrifice of Christ was again transacted, the sacred writer must assuredly have guarded his language.

* Hebrews, chaps. x. xi. *passim*.

† The Greek is ἐφάπαξ.

Appeal to
Scripture
as to the
promise of
free pardon.

It is surprising to those who have learned their theology from Holy Scripture itself, that any should be found to doubt whether the promises of God “are to be taken in their largest acceptation, as declaring His forgiveness of all sin,”* to those who unfeignedly repent, and whether we cannot successfully apply to God Himself. Taught by the Lord’s blessed prayer to call God “Father,” they know well that, as a father pitieith his children, so He pitieith them that fear Him ; and that, even if we have gone far from Him, like the prodigal in that parable which is the comfort of every believing soul, and wasted His gifts and our inheritance in riotous living, yet when chastened by His correction, and awakened by remorse His delegate, and wearied of sin, we return heart-broken, He will meet us while we are still a long way off, and fill our hearts with joy. When we are permitted to pray that God would forgive us our sins, surely it is because He intends to grant the prayer ; nor can the Lord mean forgiveness of mere venial sins, as men speak, unless it be venial sins only which He enjoins us to forgive our brother.

Pardon not
less free
under the
new than
under the
old cove-
nant.

Accustomed to think that Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, and one established upon better promises, than that which passed away when He died, we cannot believe that David, after he had been guilty of adultery and murder, and had long remained insensible to His guilt, could say,

* See Dr. Pusey’s “Sermon,” p. 21, Note.

when God touched his heart, “I acknowledged my sin unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin ;” and prophecy, “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee, in a time when Thou mayest be found” ; yet, that his example, and his prophecy, do not belong to us who are under grace. After his blood-guiltiness, he says, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness.” “Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.” Can we, the Israel of God, think that less gracious, less immediate, acceptance is offered to converted sinners now ; or that, with the legal economy, these ceased to be “the ways of the Lord”? We remember that God, who stretched out His hands all the day to a gainsaying and rebellious people of old, at a time when “there was no truth nor mercy nor knowledge of God in the land, when by swearing and lying and killing, they broke out, and blood touched blood,” thus addresses the guilty men whom, even then, He calls dear children : “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord : say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously : so will we render the calves of our lips.”* Can we, remembering this, believe

* Hosea xiv. 1-4.

that those whom He has chosen in Christ, are to expect from Him absolution less entire than the absolution which He then gave ; “ I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely. Mine anger is turned away from him.” ?

Scripture sends us for pardon of sin against God to no priestly delegate.

But we are told that “ there is not one word in Scripture of our applying to ourselves the promises of the Gospel.” * Was one word needed ? You offer bread to a famished mendicant ; does he need a special authorisation, before he reaches forth his hand to take it ? Christ saith, “ If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.” Are His ministers to stop us and say, “ Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep ” ? I will show you a hundred texts in which God shows that He Himself will give pardon, and peace, and grace, and glory. Can you show me one in which He even hints that He gives pardon of sin done against Himself through delegates only, or through delegates at all ? Much we hear of the blessings gained by faith ; of justification by faith ; of remission of sins by faith ; of obtaining promises by faith ; of sanctification by faith ; of having access to grace by faith ; of the indwelling of Christ by faith. In short, the Gospel of God is expressly declared to be the power of God unto salvation, because, in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Where do we hear of sacrifices to apply the virtue of the sacrifice on the Cross, where of the

* Dr. Pusey’s “ Sermon,” &c., p. 24.

mediation of any but Christ? We might reasonably expect some intimation of a doctrine which is now made the very foundation of the scheme of salvation, if that doctrine really were a part of it at all.

“It *may* be one of the fruits of the incarnation,” Christ our Priest; His throne the throne of grace, not the confessional. says the writer often referred to before, “that God would rather work His miracles of grace through man.” True, if this be the Man Christ Jesus, and the “miracles of grace” be the pardon of sins as done against God. That Man is in heaven; He ever liveth to make intercession for us. There is the throne of grace. With the Apostle we say, “Christ took upon Him the seed of Abraham, and was in all things made like unto His brethren, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest, in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: who, in that He hath Himself suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted; and, seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; and draw near, through the new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, that is to say, His flesh, in full assurance of faith.”* It is “part of the dignity of our redeemed nature,”† not that we

* Heb. ii. 16-18; iv. 14-16.

† See Dr. Pusey’s “Sermon,” &c., p. 45.

have sinful men ordained to be priests for us, as under the law, for a sinless man is our only priest in the proper sense of the word ; but that we are all, ministers and laymen, a spiritual priesthood, privileged, therefore, to approach God through Him for others ; and, much more, for ourselves.

Nothing in
the New
Testament
need alarm
the true
penitent
who comes
to Christ.

But “the study of the New Testament,” we are told, “might well affright the sinner. He is full of sin. It speaks chiefly of holiness as the path of the Christian.”* Doubtless it does. How could it do otherwise ? Was it not necessary that the full extent of the holiness to which Christ’s peculiar people may by grace arrive, should be set forth ? Could the fulness of the stature of Christ be lowered to suit the stunted growth of the majority of believers ? Does this imply that the writers of the New Testament imagined that all whom they had begotten in the Gospel would grow up in all things, and without any check, unto the head, invariably retain their souls’ health, and be wholly free from spot or wrinkle ? St. Paul, addressing men who were on the verge of apostasy, and who, after a long profession, had need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God, the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, yet leaves those principles behind, and goes on to that word of perfection, which, like strong meat, belongs only to

* See Dr. Pusey’s “Sermon,” &c., p. 20.

those of full age. Did he mean that the wavering Hebrews were not to recur to those first principles when, more than ever, they had need of them, or that he had no hope of their salvation? The Church of England prays that every child whom she baptizes may ever remain in the number of God's elect people; and teaches that they who be endued with so excellent a benefit of God as election, through grace obey the calling, walk religiously in all good works, and, at length, by God's mercy, attain unto everlasting life. Who, even with such a passage before him, could suppose that her invitations to repentance, and her promises of God's mercy, belong not to her sinful children, during the whole of their career, but to those only whom she admits, for the first time, into the family of God? Our standard must be perfection, though we must ever fall short of it. God knows that through the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright, and He can forgive and raise the penitent again after every fall, but His law He cannot lower.

In point of fact, does not the New Testament provide fully for the case of believers who have fallen into sin? What is the plain meaning of these words, addressed to a Christian Church: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us

The New
Testament
provides
fully for
post-bap-
tismal sin.
Hear, first,
St. John.

our sins." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "And how," to borrow a sentence, "is it consistent with reverence for the blessed Spirit to go about for meanings of His words other than they appear to mean?"* How, for instance, to maintain that these blessed passages refer primarily, that is really, to sins of infirmity; so that we are to elicit the thought in the mind of the Apostle, thus: "If any man sin from infirmity, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins of infirmity, and not for our sins of infirmity only, but also for the sins of infirmity of the whole world?" Is it meant that God can, indeed, directly issue pardon, and Christ intercede, and the atonement avail, for light but not for great sins? It is too painful to dwell on such interpretations. But they fit in well with the system of Rome. We pass on, then, and ask, Is it possible for language to convey fuller assurance or plainer directions to the penitent Christian? Was ever remission through the blood of Christ preached more freely to Jew or to heathen? Is not His sacrifice spoken of as a present propitiation, at the time when St. John wrote, though many years had elapsed since the atoning blood flowed on Calvary? Is it not for the sins of the

* Dr. Pusey's "Sermon," &c., p. 41.

children of God, such as those whom St. John addressed, just as it is for the sins of the whole world? And by what means is forgiveness, according to St. John, to be obtained by believers? Surely it is by confession of sins to Him who forgives. And if, in our shame, we dare not approach God, have we not an Advocate with the Father? To me it seems that every doubt of the most scrupulous conscience is anticipated. What room is there in the theology of St. John for a daily immolation of Christ, or secret confession, the priest's absolution, or penance, or purgatory?

Can any man believe that Simon Magus had not <sup>Hear
St. Peter.</sup> committed a most aggravated, or, to use the dangerous phraseology of Rome, a mortal, sin;—one, therefore, that required the application of all the remedies which God has placed at the disposal of His Church. What, then, is the language of St. Peter, when the unhappy man stands before him, stricken with awe by his stern rebuke? Is it not simply, “Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”* Precisely thus, in such a case, would we speak. Would he not, who, as they say, now occupies the chair of St. Peter, have other counsel to give?

We are surprised when we hear a great divine <sup>Hear
St. James.</sup> assert,† that, as far as appears from the letter of

* Acts viii. 22.

† See Dr. Pusey's “Sermon,” &c., p. 24.

Holy Scripture, the sins and iniquities which are to be no more remembered under the new covenant, are those anterior to baptism, in the face of such Apostolic teaching as this ; “ Brethren, if any *of you* do err from the truth, and one convert him : let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide *a multitude of sins.*” *

Hear
St. Paul.

And if we turn to that Apostolic Church with which we are best acquainted—a Church which came behind in no gift—do we find that all its members were spiritual ? Nay ; would not the minister of a modern congregation be well-nigh reduced to despair, if attendants at the Lord’s table were such as St. Paul describes his believing, but carnal, Corinthians ? There were among them “ debates, envyings, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, tumults.” They were in such a state, that he doubted whether his authority would be acknowledged among them at all. And are these mere venial sins ? But what shall we say of the many who had been guilty of uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, and had not repented ? What of those who were drunken at the Lord’s Supper ? What of those who had fellowship with devils ? How does St. Paul deal with the case ? Does he think it impossible to renew such men unto repentance ? No ! though he does intimate the danger of reprobation. Does he say that they

* St. James v. 19, 20.

cannot be restored as at the first ? Does he promise to immolate Christ again, in order to appease God in their behalf, or enjoin auricular confession, or recommend sacerdotal absolution, or require penal satisfaction ? No ! he commands the ejection of one offender guilty of incest, in order that he may be brought to a sense of his guilt. Others he threatens to punish with the rod committed to him by Christ, if they do not repent ; evidently implying that they might, by repentance, render his censures unnecessary. But his remedy for their sins is that which our Church would in such a case apply—that which he offered when he first sought to make them Christians—repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “God,” he says, “was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* And when he is comforted in his Corinthians, is it because they have become fit to hear the blessed words, and have had recourse to the great authoritative act ; or, simply, because “they have sorrowed after a godly sort,”† and “their sorrow hath wrought a change of mind unto

* 2 Cor. v. 19-21.

† 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10.

salvation, and they have been made sorry after a godly manner, that they might receive damage by him in nothing?" Surely, all this is natural only on the hypothesis of our Church. If sacrifice, and confession, and absolution, and satisfaction, then held such a place in the daily life of Christians, as they do now in Rome, we should sometimes hear of them as remedies, or comforts, or warnings, or motives, in an Epistle which deals so much with that life; as we hear in the New Testament, at every step, of repentance and faith, of God and His grace, of Christ and His cross. But it is simply ludicrous to transfer in imagination the system of Rome to Apostolic times.

Opponents, however, assert that our system does not take into account the solemn words in which our Lord promised to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, giving him, at the same time, the assurance, that whatever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven—an assurance afterwards repeated to His disciples, with the explanation, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them; and that our system must therefore be false. They assert also, that we elude the commission which the Apostles and other disciples received, when the Lord sent them, as He had been sent by His Father. The commission was, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them. Whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." It is contended that

Scriptural objections made by Rome to the doctrine of the Church of England.

this language plainly implies the whole Romish system.

Now, the real sense of our Lord's words, whether it seems plain or not, is that in which they were understood by the persons to whom they were addressed. That sense they must bear now, unless the Holy Spirit, by some passage of Scripture, or by the practice of the Apostles, have shown that we must assign to them another. But the words in question, and the powers which they denoted, were very familiar to the Jews.

During the Babylonish captivity, their polity and worship were in abeyance. The synagogue became the substitute for both, arising naturally among a people which had to maintain a separate existence, a peculiar creed, and a law unsanctioned by the temporal powers. The manifest utility of the institution, in giving to the people a knowledge and a love of their religion which they never had before ; and the discovery, thus made, of the strong influence of moral sanctions in securing obedience to law, and of the power of a voluntary association upon each of its members,—caused it to be retained, even after the sceptre had been restored to Judah, and sacrifice to Mount Sion. The synagogue became as essential in Judæa, when the government fell into the hands of unbelievers, as it had been during the long exile of her people ; and when the Jews had spread over the world, under a secret Providence, in order that they might prepare the way before

True sense
of the
passages
alleged.

Christianity, it again served in foreign lands as the bond to keep them from melting into the nations around them.

Upon this admirable organization was modelled the Christian Church, which, like the synagogue, was, at the first at least, intended to keep together a peculiar people, under a powerful though voluntary government, to educate them in a religious system, which can be learned only by careful teaching and diligent attention, and to perpetuate the common worship of Spirit and of truth which is essential to Christianity. The names, the duties, the powers of the officers in both are the same, or as nearly the same as the case admits ; and the form of worship not dissimilar.

Our Lord's positive institutions are, like His great commandment, new and old ; old, because they had a prior existence ; new, because they have a higher sanction, higher efficacy, higher objects. Thus, the rite by which Christians are admitted into the body, is borrowed from the rite devised by the Jews for the reception of proselytes ; and the rite by which our communion with the Head, and with each other, is peculiarly maintained, from the repast of bread and wine substituted in Babylon for the Paschal Supper, and retained after the restoration ; so, too, the polity and form of worship of His kingdom from the synagogue. The Lord has ingrafted into the Church nothing of the positive institutions of Moses ; nothing that might

lead to the fatal error of confounding Christian observances with Jewish sacrifices, or Christian ministers with Jewish priests ; yet all of this kind which He did ordain was familiar to the Jews.

In the mind of the Apostle, then, the synagogue, not the state, conveyed the idea of legitimate and divine government, and what the Lord bestows upon the humble and despised fishermen, as His servants and the servants of His Church, is an authority and a pre-eminence in the spiritual polity which He came to found, similar to that which filled them with awe, in the hands of each elder and doctor, and in the great council of their nation. They, or those to whom they should communicate the like powers, were to admit into the kingdom of Christ, to eject from it, to restore to it, to expound and to enforce its laws, to teach, to exhort, to rebuke, to chastise, with all authority. To despise them, was to despise Christ ; even as to resist the political magistrate, who is, in his sphere, the minister of God, is to resist God. In this sense it is, that what they bound or loosed on earth was bound or loosed in heaven. In both cases it is, of course, supposed that God approves of acts only if they are righteous, and within the compass of the commission given ; though in both cases, whether they be righteous or not, the same consequences follow upon earth. We may, then, acquiesce in one of the interpretations of Cyril, namely, "that the Apostles exercised the power of retaining and

remitting sin, by correcting the children of the Church when sinning, and pardoning them when repenting."* This duty was enforced by St. Paul when he called upon the Corinthians gathered together, to deliver, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, the incestuous person unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. There are many other traces of apostolic practice in the execution of the Lord's commission, which all show that it was used for the purpose of removing scandals,† and alarming sinners; not as a remedy of necessary application to all Christians, or for ordinary and secret sins. To suit the views of the upholders of sacramental penance, the commission should have been exclusive of any other mode of remitting sin, and conditional upon the ratification of God; on the contrary, it is absolute in its terms, and it certainly does not imply that God ceased to forgive sin Himself, when He issued it through the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it had nothing to do with the pardon of sins as committed against Him.

For some centuries the Church exercised the same power, in the same manner, but with a rigour, and to an extent, which ultimately destroyed the whole system: the power of binding and loosing, by her Councils; that of remitting or retaining sins, by the hands of her chief ministers,

* Cyril, quoted by Dr. Pusey, "Sermon," p. 32.

† 1 Tim. v. 20, 22.

in each separate portion of the kingdom of God. Her interference, however, at first extended only to three classes of sins,* murder, adultery, and

* Erasmus remarks, that though it is evident that secret confession did not exist in early times, 'specially in those of Jerome, yet the divines of his own day, not considering advisedly what they said, fell into a great error; for whatever the ancients wrote of the public and general confession, they wrested to the secret confession of sinners, which was not yet instituted. The same improper application of such passages is made in our time. Pacian, for instance, is repeatedly quoted by some writers, as if he really bore testimony to the system practised in Rome, and recommended to us. It may be useful to refer to a passage of his work on penitence, which shows the received opinion in his age. His explanation of the text of Scripture which he cites, and his extravagant language when speaking controversially of priestly power, will not raise our opinion of his judgment. But he may be regarded as a competent witness to facts. As such writers do, he exaggerates the difficulty of reconciliation after grievous sin, till it sounds almost like an impossibility; but, in the end, you find that it is quite the reverse, if only you follow the system recommended. "We are kept bound as to a few necessary matters," he says, "as to which it would be very easy for a believer to be on his guard; so that he must justly deserve to die who does not observe even these few. Let us see what they are. After the passion of the Lord, the Apostles, having examined and discussed the subject, sent a letter to the Gentile believers, of which this was the tenor: 'The Apostles, and elders, and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law—to whom we gave no such commandment—it seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than these three necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.' This is the sum of the New Testament. The Holy Ghost, though despised in many things, has left us these (only) to be avoided, as capital offences. All other sins are atoned for by improvement. These three are to be shunned as the breath of a basilisk or the bite of a serpent. Covetousness is redeemed by kindness, and all other vices by their contraries. But what shall the despiser of God do? what the murderer?

idolatry ; and to overt acts alone, unless the offender, in order to relieve his mind, was pleased to reveal his guilt to his assembled brethren : a course much encouraged, and even urged as necessary to salvation, when men began to confound the pardon of the Church with the pardon of God. Still these two ideas were long kept sufficiently distinct, in the main. “ What have I to do with men,” said St. Augustine,* “ that they should hear my confession, as though they were able to heal my disease ? ” For many centuries, no man was

How shall the fornicator be healed ? ” Pacian then urges such persons to refrain from approaching the altar with defiled mouth and unclean hands, but to submit to penitence ; and if the priests either do not know or could not prove their guilt, to acknowledge it, if not publicly, yet before a few, (since, where two or three are, there the Church is, and where the Church is, there is Christ,) in order that, being aided by the tears of the Church, they might be absolved by the prayers of Christ ; next, to undergo the remedies prescribed—mourning and sackcloth, ashes and fasting. “ So far as you do not spare yourselves,” he adds, “ so far will God spare you. Lo ! I pledge myself that if you will do this, if you return to the Father of Mercies by a true satisfaction, without further adding to your former sins, and utter a lowly and piteous prayer, ‘ We have sinned against Thee, Father, and are no more worthy to be called Thy sons,’ straightway the herd of swine and the loathsome husks shall depart from you, and you shall be received with a kiss.” Does such a passage suggest the same ideas as a Romish treatise on penance ? If the good bishop could return to Barcelona, and learn that every Christian there, from the mendicant to the prelate, every year, at least, confessed and submitted to penance, would he not think that his people had become a horde of murderers or adulterers ? If he learnt that absolution and communion were granted before penance, would he not think that the Church abetted crime ? Confession to one man only, and never to be revealed, he would deem a contradiction in terms.

* Quoted in the second part of the Sermon of Repentance.

absolved more than once in his life; but, of course, no one supposed that a person who remained under excommunication would therefore remain unforgiven by God, if he repented unfeignedly. There is nothing, in short, as papal divines themselves proclaim, in common between the ancient discipline* and that of Rome, though we can trace each successive corruption which gradually brought in her practice and her theories; and so perceive, at a glance, the futility of the notion advanced by some Romish divines, that, side by side with the public discipline for notorious scandals, there existed a system of secret confession, and private absolution, for sins as committed against God; of which we hear not one word either in Fathers, or Councils, or Scriptures.

The system of the primitive Church, which was grossly exaggerated after the great persecutions, is nowhere carried out. Perhaps it cannot be. It was not without its evils when it hardened into

Failure of
the post-
Apostolic
system of
penitence.

* The Synod of Pistoia voted that "it could not sufficiently admire the venerable discipline of antiquity, which did not admit a man easily, or perhaps ever, to penitence, who, after his first reconciliation, had relapsed into sin; for that a great restraint was laid on those who think not much of the sinfulness of sin, and fear it too little, by the fear of perpetual exclusion from communion and peace." This Pius VI. condemns in the Bull "Auctorem fidei," as redolent of heretical pravity.

"*Observa*," writes Dens, "*illam publicam confessionem non fuisse sacramentalem neque in ea debuisse declarari peccata occulta, prout Conc. Trid. indicat, Sess. 14, 5, licet, ex humilitate et aliquando eis permitteretur. Solebat ex judicio Penitentiarii extra confessionem confessio et pœnitentia publica fieri, et aliquibus tamen locis circa ea diversus fuit usus, imo et alibi abusus.*"—(Tom. vi. p. 79.)

precision, and fell into hands unlike those of St. Paul. It too often kept our gracious Lord out of sight. Arrogance in the clergy, blind deference on the part of the people, the abandonment of Christianity by many of those who had incurred censure, self-righteousness in those who were untouched, the absolution of the Church mistaken for peace with God, and the standard of holiness and duty lowered to that which sufficed for a man to escape animadversion, baptism superstitiously deferred till the hour of death ; these seem to have been the “advantages which Satan took” from it, or, it may be, from the mode in which it was exercised. If needed, discipline will arise among us naturally, as it has arisen among our converts in India. It is not practicable, and, therefore, I cannot think it needed among us now. The early Church, like our missionaries, had to deal with proselytes, who retained the heathen idea that immorality and religion are not things incompatible. With us, evil men excommunicate themselves ; and, probably, the Bible and the Pulpit fence the Lord’s table more effectually than the rigour of canons, and stern prelates, ever did. The old penitential system was, after all, but a means, useless if the end could be attained without it.

Certain it is, however, that, if the wants of the Church ever called for its restoration, discipline would offer no difficulty in our practice, nor require any change in our teaching. None would,

in such a case, be more anxious, than a true penitent who had humbled himself under the mighty hand of God, to kiss the rod of the Ruler ; none more anxious for the peace of the Church, than he who had found peace through Christ with God ; none more anxious to be restored to the communion of the precious Body and Blood of the Redeemer, than he who was united to Him by faith ; and if, as seems to be the case,* the power of loosing and binding in heaven and earth was given not to Apostles only, but to every offended brother, by our Lord, who thus secured a fear to offend, as by the condition on which we are daily to sue for remission of sin he secured a readiness to forgive ; none more anxious to seek for reconciliation with man, and to make full reparation, than he who believes that he has been freely forgiven of God.

We have now examined the cases in which the New Testament speaks of absolution by man, and our conclusion is, that in all the passages so examined, the reference is to sins as done against the Church, or against a brother, not to sins as done against God.

* “Cum Christus Petro diceret, Tibi dabo claves regni cœlorum, universam significabat ecclesiam.”—Augustinus, *in Joh. Tract. 24.*
 “Quæcumque ligaveris super terram, erunt ligata in cœlo. Cœpisti habere fratrem tuum tanquam publicanum, ligas illum in terra. Cum autem correxeris, et concordaveris cum fratre tuo, solvisti illum in terra. Cum solveris in terra solitus erit in cœlo.”—Idem. *De Verb. Divino, Secund. Matt. Serm. 16.*

Our doctrine
meets all
scriptural
require-
ments as to
confession.

Nor do we disregard the requirements of Scripture with regard to confession. Repentance implies self-accusation ; and the soul, when in deep sorrow, finds no relief, unless it disburthen itself. How gracious, then, it is, on the part of our righteous, but loving, Father, to require that we should confess our sins, before He restores us to the light of His countenance ; whether we confess in general terms, like that publican, who, smiting his breast, only said, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” yet went down to his house justified ; or, what is, in general, more salutary, by a conscientious detail of our misdeeds and evil thoughts with all their aggravations, painful as it may be thus to lay bare all our shame and ingratitude before Him. We may, without rebuke, expose in His sight the ulcers of the soul. Day by day He permits us thus to awaken His mercy and pity. We gladly comply with His command, for it becomes a necessity, and a high blessing, to every child of God. What a motive to love Him and to trust in Him, is the knowledge, that He is willing to hear all that we are willing to tell ; and that He, the Omnipresent and Omniscient, gives to each of us, guilty and unworthy as we are, the same attention which He would give if we were the only objects of His care in all creation. Is it not clear that, if He Himself hears our confession, He Himself engages to give us remission of sins ? Can we doubt the gracious assertion of the text, “I, even I, am He

Comfort of
confession
to God.

that blotteth out thy transgression for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”? Other absolution than His we need not; and we believe, and therefore make our own, every declaration of His pardoning grace, which we read in His Word, or hear from His ministers. I know that every promise in that Word is addressed to me as fully as if I were the only child of Adam, and as if Christ had died for me alone; and I say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.”* To Christians who seek for forgiveness through man, we put the Prophet’s question to his own people, “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.”†

Nor let me be told, that in this system there is no comfort to the penitent, that he cannot know “that he is restored,” or “that his restoration is complete.”‡ He has hope of his acceptance with God, if not always because he possesses peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the exulting sense of

The doctrine
of the
Church of
England
yields true
comfort.

* Psalm ciii. 2, 3.

† Isaiah xl. 27-31.

‡ Dr. Pusey’s “Sermon,” &c., p. 19.

spiritual health, yet because he is conscious, amidst his sorrow, of increasing hatred of sin and love of holiness, of more spiritualized affections and new power over the flesh. He lives, and feels that he lives, because he prays and loves. But the only secure tests of repentance are its fruits and its duration. The assurance of faith, to which we arrive at last, is only a moral conviction, but it *is* a *conviction*, deep and comforting. Our heart ceases at length to condemn us; we have the testimony of a good conscience, and so we obtain confidence towards God. Can the absolution of a priest do more than this for us, unless we have brought ourselves to think that attrition suffices; and that the judgment of the priest as to sins against God, like the acquittal of a jury, can never be reversed? Is not every pious Romanist, however extravagantly he may extol the necessity and the efficacy of sacerdotal absolution, forced to say: “Grievous sins are remitted by absolution”*—“yet the penitent has to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that according to his merits the Lord may ratify or annul the judgment of His servant.” However much “he may wish to be,”† “how can he *know* that he is in a state of grace,” with a higher degree of certainty than the system of Scripture, and the Church of England, can give?

In one passage only of the New Testament, is confession before men recommended to Christians,

Confession
to man in
the New
Testament
considered.

* Dr. Pusey’s “Sermon,” &c., p. 26. † Ibid., Preface, p. 1.

or connected with a name which can belong specially to ministers of Christ. It is in the Epistle of St. James. Let us refer to it. “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*

A glance suffices to show that nothing here refers to auricular confession. If we connect the words, “Confess your faults to one another,” with the injunction before given to a sick brother to call for the elders of the Church, that they might anoint him with oil, and pray over him—an injunction accompanied by a promise that the prayer of faith should raise the sick, and that if he had committed sins they should be forgiven him—the interpretation of the whole passage will probably appear to be that the sicknesses in question are judicial visitations, similar to those which fell on some Corinthians for outrages at the Lord’s Table, designed by Him to uphold the respect due to His ordinances and the authority of His ministers, and requiring therefore open submission, in the presence of the representatives of the Church, before the supernatural remedy for the supernatural disease could be applied, and

* James v. 14-16.

the sin which caused it be remitted. If ordinary diseases could thus be cured, why was Trophimus left at Miletum sick? The sufferers, we are here expressly told, were to confess their faults, that they might be healed. The suffering, then, was penal. And the remission was wrought by God Himself, in answer to the prayer of the Church, not the effect of sacerdotal absolution. Or the words may be detached from their context, and referred to the mutual confession of sin among brethren with a view to consolation and counsel, and, above all, to the promised benefits of united prayer. Blessed, indeed, may be the effects of such communion; deep the comfort arising from the mutual faith of Christians; powerful the provocation which is given to love and to good works, when like-minded men, in honour preferring one another, can open their souls to each other as they can to God.

But what has this to do with sacramental confession? "Whereas," says our Homily,* "the adversaries go about to wrest this place for to maintain their auricular confession withal, they are greatly deceived themselves, and deceive others; for if the text might be understood of auricular confession, then the priests are as much bound to confess to the lay people as the lay people to the priests. And if to pray be to absolve, then the laity, by this place, have as great authority to

* The Second Part of the Sermon of Repentance.

absolve the priest as the priests have to absolve the lay people."

It would be a waste of precious time to shew at length that our Church repudiates the idea of a present propitiatory sacrifice, whether of our Lord, under the form of bread and wine, or of bread and wine before consecration—that poor phantom of a Mass which some eyes detect in our Liturgy, lurking behind one word in a parenthesis. Any other satisfaction for sin than that of Christ on the cross she expressly denies, as you have heard, and regards as a "dangerous deceit."

It is startling to a reader of our Homily of Repentance and Reconciliation with God, to hear it asserted that "our Church implies," in one of her formularies, "that absolution after penance is the way of healing post-baptismal sin";* that in some cases she recommends auricular confession, but does not restrict it to the cases in which she recommends it; and that she empowers her ministers to give authoritative absolution in private to persons who are not sick.

Can one so teach who has declared "that the Book of Homilies doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine," and who "judges them to be read in churches diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people"? That book speaks of auricular confession, and the power of the keys, in the following terms: "Whereas they

* Dr. Pusey's "Sermon," &c., p. 14, note.

do allege the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ to the leper, to prove auricular confession to stand in the word of God, 'Go thy way, and shew thyself to the priest.' Do they not see that he was cleansed before he was by Christ sent to the priest? By the same reason we must be cleansed from our spiritual leprosy before we come to confession. What need we, then, to set forth our sins unto the ear of the priest since they be already taken away? Therefore holy Ambrose saith full well, Go shew thyself unto the priest. Who is the true priest, but He who is the priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek? Whereby the holy father doth understand that, both the priesthood and the law being changed, we ought to acknowledge none other priest for deliverance from our sins but our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, being Sovereign Bishop, doth with the sacrifice of His body and blood once offered upon the Cross, most effectually cleanse the spiritual leprosy, and wash away the sins of those that make true confession unto Him. It is most evident that auricular confession has not the warrant of God's Word. Being, therefore, not led by the conscience thereof, let us, with fear and holy trembling, use that kind of confession that God doth command."*

As to absolution, hear the statement of doctrine given to the world in "THE APOLOGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND"; a book recognised as such

Fourth
assertion,
as to
absolution,
considered.

* The Second Part of the Sermon of Repentance.

in the canons, and, therefore, to be counted among our symbolical documents.

“ We say that the office of loosing consisteth in this, that the minister, either by the preaching of the Gospel, offereth the merits of Christ, and full pardon, to such as have lowly and contrite hearts, and do unfeignedly repent themselves, promising unto them a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins, and hope of everlasting pardon ; or else, that the same minister, when any have offended their brother’s mind with some great offence or notable and open crime, whereby they have, as it were, banished and made themselves strangers from the common fellowship and body of Christ, then, after perfect amendment of such persons, doth reconcile them, and bring them home again to the company and unity of the faithful.” Bishop Jewel, our apologist, thus sums up the teaching of the Church on the point : “ We make no confusion of the keys. Our doctrine is plain, that there be two keys in the Church of God. The one of instruction, the other of correction ; whereof the one worketh inwardly, the other outwardly. The one before God ; the other before the congregation. And yet either of them standeth wholly in the Word of God.” *

But there are two passages in the Book of Common Prayer which have been claimed as showing that we are justified in holding a system of auricular confession and sacerdotal absolution

Objections
arising
from two
passages
in our
Liturgy.

* *Def. of the Apol.*, 2 part, p. 149, ed. 1567.

akin to the system of Rome; and which often create uneasiness as to the soundness, or at least as to the consistency, of our Church in the minds of many of her truest sons. Let us, however, remember the authoritative account of her principles delivered in the Articles, the Homilies, the Apology, and the whole tenor of the Prayer-book itself, when we are considering the two passages alleged; and we shall feel convinced that the Reformers could not intend there to build up again what they had destroyed, or to relapse into the worst errors of Rome; and that those passages are not to be treated as isolated passages, but must be taken in connection with the formularies at large, and understood accordingly. It will not be difficult to solve the question, if we carefully examine the passages themselves, and compare them with the authoritative expositions of the teaching of the Church. Let us now do so briefly.

Explanation
of the first
passage.

In the exhortation before the Communion, we say, “Because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust in God’s mercy, and a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any of you who cannot quiet his own conscience, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God’s Word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God’s Word he may receive the benefit of absolution.”*

* It will be well to compare this exhortation with the close of the Second Part of the Sermon of Repentance. “I do not say, but that

Observe first, that in the first liturgy of King Edward, which left auricular confession an indifferent if any do find themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned Curate or Pastor, or to some other godly learned man, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God's Word; but it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance." Calvin, *Instit.*, lib. iii. c. iv. n. 14, agrees with our Reformers: "Unusquisque fidelium, si privatim ita angitur . . . ut se explicare nisi alieno adjutorio nequeat, non negligere debet quod illi a Deo affertur remedium, nempe, ut ad se sublevandum privata confessione apud suum pastorem utatur." "Clavum potestas in remittendo peccato locum habet, cum is qui ob conscientiae inquietudinem ope ministri indiget, suam illi infirmitatem aperit." In what sense our confessors and martyrs understood the opening of grief and the benefit of absolution by the ministry of God's Word, may be seen in two touching letters between Careless and Bradford the martyr, when prisoners. The former, after expressing at great length the anguish of his soul under a sense of sin, writes: "Thus, my dearest beloved heart in the Lord, as I began with heaviness so end I with mourning, being right sorry (if I might otherwise do) to trouble you with this terrible tragedy of my woeful state. But also to whom should I show my wound, but to Him who can apply a right plaster to the same? To whom should I make my moan, but to such a careful friend as would gladly mourn with me, and not to the proud Pharisees that would laugh me to scorn?" Bradford applies the Word of God to the comfort of Careless, after prayer for mercy to himself and the penitent, in these terms: "Concerning your request of absolution, my dearest brother, what shall I say, but even as the truth is, that the Lord of all mercy and Father of all comfort, through the merits and mediation of His dear Son, the only Lord and Saviour, hath clearly remitted and pardoned all thy offences, whatsoever they be, that ever hitherto thou hast committed against His Majesty; and, therefore, He hath given to thee as to His child, dear brother John Careless, in token that thy sins are pardoned—He, I say, hath given unto thee a penitent and believing heart, that is, a heart which desireth to repent and believe; for such a one is accepted of Him, He taking the will for the deed, for a penitent and believing heart indeed. Wherefore, my good brother, be merry, glad, and of good cheer, for the Lord hath taken away thy sins," &c. &c.

thing, the phrase “confess his sin . . . secretly,” was found. It is now struck out. The words “receive absolution” were then used without qualification; now they stand thus modified: “By the ministry of God’s Word receive the benefit of absolution.” It was also then provided that the form of absolution which is found in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, should be used in all cases of private confession. That rubric has been ejected from our liturgy, and no other form has been sanctioned. Can this deliberate repudiation of practices once sanctioned, and of almost every expression connected with them, arise from any cause but a conviction of the erroneousness of the principles on which they were founded? Are we authorized, then, I ask, either by the spirit of our Church’s teaching, or by the letter of her laws, to urge, or even to receive, auricular confession as in the Church of Rome?

Kind of confession which we are authorized to make or receive.

It is a blessed part of the ministerial office to comfort the feeble-minded and to support the weak; and, therefore, the Church commands us to tender aid to such Christians; to give them sympathy, as being ourselves in the body; to listen to their sorrows; to speak such cheering words as we think that He, who was anointed to heal the broken-hearted, would, if He still ministered on earth, speak to those who are weary and heavy-laden; and as His ambassadors to give them, too, the assurance of peace with God. Most cordially do

we echo the words of our own Hooker :* “ Forasmuch as they wrong themselves with over rigorous and extreme exactions, by means whereof they fall sometimes into such perplexities as can hardly be allayed ; it hath therefore pleased Almighty God, in tender commiseration over these imbecilities of men, to ordain for the spiritual and ghostly comfort consecrated persons, which, by sentence of power and authority given from above, may, as it were, out of his very mouth ascertain timorous and doubtful minds in their own particular, ease them of all scrupulosities, leave them settled in peace, and satisfied, teaching the mercy of God towards them. To use the benefit of this help in such case, is so natural that it can be forbidden to no man, but yet not so necessary that all men should be in case to need it.” Most true ; but we should ill discharge our duty if we did not earnestly strive to qualify our people to work out their own salvation, though with fear and trembling. The ministers of the Church of England must not endeavour to keep the people in tutelage, but diligently teach that Word which can make men free. We degrade our office, if we make ourselves mere instructors of the foolish, and teachers of babes. Our praise is, when the laity are filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, having their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Let us bear with their infirmities and be

* *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v. p. 98, edit. 1820.

helpers of their joy, but ever remember that by faith they stand. We may hear their tale, but we must press for nothing more. If we declare forgiveness of sins, it must not be as judges passing sentence, but “giving our judgment as those that have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” Ever, then, let us remit such penitents to Christ, and to God, “who was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself.” Say, in the words, if you will, of the canonized Laurentius, Bishop of Novaria, addressed thirteen centuries ago, to despairing penitents :* “What mean these words, O man, who art the image of God ? He hath made thee wise, He hath given thee intelligence, and would not that thou shouldest perish. Why dost thou despair, when He does not despise ? God is in thee. He will be to thee repentance, and a fountain, and a baptism. It was an Evangelic not a Jewish mark, which thou didst receive on thy forehead. Thou art to thyself a perennial fountain and a daily remission, and hast no need of a teacher, or the priest’s right hand. Do as Zacchæus did. It is not, indeed, a crowd of men, but thy busy thoughts, which intercept thy view. But thou hast a tree within thee—thy faith, a lofty height from which to see, a tree most fruitful, a tree on which the marks of the cross are impressed. Ascend this, and look on Christ, as Zacchæus did, and let Him say to

* S. Laur. Ep. Nov. *De Pœnit.*, Hom. 1., *Bibliot. Pat.* ii. p. 132-134.

thee, ‘This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a child of Abraham.’”

Are we empowered to use an indicative and judicial form of absolution in such a case, or any form of absolution at all? I reply, Assuredly not. We are to absolve “by the ministry of God’s Word,”* that is, “we must offer the merits of Christ and full pardon to the contrite, promising unto them a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins,” to use words of authority which you have already heard. It would be an outrage against God and our Church, to let men suppose for a moment that, as the Catechism of Trent speaks, “we do the same thing which God Himself does, who is the Author and Father of grace and righteousness.”† “Remittuntur peccata per verbum Dei, cuius Levites est interpres,”‡ says Ambrose. True; our aim, therefore, must be, by sound doctrine, to hasten in every soul that blessed state of promise, which is thus described in Holy Writ: “And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sin and their iniquities will I remember no more.”§

* Dr. Pusey quotes the words, “receive the benefit of absolution,” without the essential addition which determines their meaning, “by the ministry of God’s word.”—Preface, p. viii.

† Dublin edition, p. 211.

‡ Ambrose, *De Cain et Abel.*

§ Heb. viii. 11, 12.

The second
passage in
our Liturgy.

There are three forms of absolution in our Liturgy. The first is a ministerial declaration of pardon by God; the second is an intercessory prayer; the third, found in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, consists partly of such a prayer, partly of a remission of sins in the indicative mood: "I absolve thee." Of the two former we need not speak particularly. None question their lawfulness or their value.

Indicative
form of
absolution.

For more than twelve centuries the indicative mood of absolving was unknown in the Western, as it is still in the Eastern Church. It was only after the Lateran decree of the year 1215 had rendered auricular confession of all sins obligatory upon all the members of the Western Church, that it was used. Opposed at the first, it obtained general favour when a belief in the necessity and efficacy of what became the sacrament of penance was more firmly rooted in the minds of the people. In the course of sixty years it superseded all other modes of remission; and now it is represented as the formal, or, in more usual language, as the essential, part of the Sacrament; so that sin is remitted by "Ego absolvo te,"* as bread is transubstantiated by "Hoc est enim corpus meum." It is somewhat surprising that a form so recent, and

* Sensus formæ sacramentalis est: Ego judicialiter tibi confero gratiam remissionis peccatorum tuorum, sive gratiam de se remissivam peccatorum tuorum, quantum est ex parte ministerii mei. Sensus formæ non potest admitti iste: Declaro te esse absolutum; quia id est damnatum a Concil. Trident. sess. 14, can. 9."—Dens.

apparently so repugnant to the principles of our Church, should have been retained.

But observe, that confession is not to be called for, or absolution to be pronounced at all, if the minister has ascertained that the sick person repents him truly of his sins, is in charity with all the world, and is willing to make amends if he have done injury or wrong. In such a case our ministry is at an end. Only if the sick person feel his conscience burdened with any weighty matter, is he to be moved at all to confession; only if he humbly desire it, is absolution to be given. If our Church regarded judicial absolution and auricular confession as “the provision made by God,” for the pardon of sin as against Him, and the “very remedy” for moral evil; or if she even thought them generally conducive to those great ends, she could not, surely, without a total dereliction of her duty, refrain from enforcing, or, at least, from urging them on all her children, and on every possible occasion.

Why, then, has she, even in individual instances, sanctioned the use of the Romish and modern form? She has not done so without reason; because she has the power to loose or to bind, to remit or to retain sin, as fully as Church ever had.*

* “For the rest M. Harding says, ‘Such priests because ye have not in your new Church, at least, after this wise using priestly authority, and none will suffer to be made, and such authority to be exercised, ye do defraud the people of the great benefit of the sacrament of penance, keeping them fast bound to their sins, after

The revisers of our Liturgy thought, it may be, that having guarded the Church against misconstruction, by teaching that man is justified by faith only, by declaring in the Articles that the Romish Sacrament of Penance is a corrupt following of the Apostles, by banishing confessionals from our Churches, and by abolishing all besides that was suspicious, they could safely keep a form, the rejection of which would, at that time, have been construed into a surrender of the rights and duties of a Church.

But the case admits of further explanation. The form of absolution which our ministers are permitted to use, in one peculiar case, at the visitation of the sick, consists of an intercessory prayer, and of a sentence which bears a judicial aspect. If the former part refer to sins as committed against God, and the latter to the censures of the Church,

baptism committed. And so ye cause their everlasting damnation for whom Christ hath shed His blood.' These great words . . . are full of terror and void of wit. For the Church of England hath authority this day by God's Word to bind and to loose, as much as ever Christ gave any to His Apostles. And by the same authority is able to bind . . . an open offender: and, as St. Paul saith, to deliver him to Satan. And, undoubtedly, being so bound on earth he shall also stand bound in heaven. Our people remain not bound, nor perish in their sins, as these men so uncharitably and fondly have imagined. They be so certain of the remission of their sins in the Blood of Christ, as if Christ Himself were present and spake it to them. They are taught and know, that the Blood of Christ, the Son of God, hath made us clean from all our sins; and that there is no name under heaven whereby we shall be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ."—Bishop Jewel, *Def. of the Apol.*, 2nd part, p. 143, ed. 1567.

incurred or merited, and to admission to the Holy Communion, the case is plain. To the use of an absolute form of words for the latter objects there seems to be no valid objection ; for when our Lord conferred the commission under which all Church authority must be exercised, He used absolute terms. "Whose sins," He said, "ye remit" ; and it is lawful, therefore, for His servant, in the exercise of that authority, to say likewise, "I remit," when, as our Church speaks through her Apologist, "He is bringing home to the Church those who have banished and made themselves strangers from the company of the faithful." That such is the intention of our Church, may appear, not only from the form of absolution itself, and her definition of the key of power, but also from the terms of the prayer which is to follow the absolution. "O most merciful God," is the minister to say, "*open Thine eye of mercy upon this Thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness; preserve and continue him in the unity of the Church.* And forasmuch as he putteth his full trust only in Thy mercy, *impute not unto him his former sins.*" There the possession of the peace of the Church is spoken of as an accomplished fact, but the non-imputation of former sins is still made a subject of prayer, and sought on the ground of the affiance of the penitent on the mercy of God. Such is the view taken by Archbishop Secker, and other authorities,

of the intention of our Church. “All writers,” he says, “on the subject, have agreed that absolution either was intended (which indeed is most probable) only to set persons free from the ecclesiastical censures which they might have incurred ; an indulgence granted in every age of the Church to such as were dangerously ill, on their humble request ; but by which it is no more pretended to make a change in their eternal state, than a pardon from the king is ; or, if it mean also to declare them restored to the favour of God, means it only on the supposition of a sincere and thorough repentance.”* It is no valid objection to this view that among us very few are shut out from communion except on their own responsibility, and that it follows, therefore, there can be no question here of restoration to it, or freeing from Church censures. The “weighty matter” confessed would probably be a sufficient cause of self-

* So Bishop Burnet, but more positively, “We do also, as we are a body that may be offended with the sins of others, forgive the scandals committed against the Church ; and that such as we think die in a state of repentance, may die in the full peace of the Church, we join both absolutions in one ; in the last office praying likewise to our Saviour that He would forgive them, and then we as the officers of the Church, authorized to that end, do forgive all the offences and scandals committed by them against the whole body.”—Burnet, Art. xxv.

See, too, Mr. Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*, vol. ii. p. 220, “It has ever been customary,” he says, “for the presbyters of the Church to visit the sick, and after praying for them, and, if necessary, reconciling them to the Church by the blessing of absolution, to communicate to them the Sacrament of our Lord’s Body and Blood. For these purposes, the English ritual contains a formulary.”

exclusion, or of authoritative exclusion from the Lord's Table, even in our lax state of discipline. But our Reformers hoped and expected to establish among us a discipline as stern as that which the Puritans in their brief day of power did set in operation. A rigid code of Ecclesiastical Law was, in the time of King Edward VI., actually read once in the House of Lords. It instituted a weekly inquisition into the manners of men in every parish, was not sparing of awful excommunications, and made provision for summary absolution and restoration to the communion at the hour of death. Had such legislation gained a hold on the consciences of men, the necessity of clinical absolution would have recurred every day. The expected want may thus have been provided for.

If, however, you consider that the words, "I absolve thee," refer also to the remission of sins as committed against God, and hold, according to St. Jerome's illustration, quoted with approval in our Homily, that as the priest, under the law, was said to cleanse or to pollute the leper, because he judged that God had, or had not, afflicted him with disease ; or as the Scribes* might have been said to open the kingdom of heaven, if they had not taken away the key of knowledge ; so, the minister of Christ may be said to remit sins as against God, because by the use of that key, he is qualified to judge of a man's spiritual state, and, by his judg-

* Matt. xxiii. 13.

ment, to give comfort and assurance to the contrite but doubting heart, you have in favour of your view many ancient divines, and many of our own theologians; and you attribute to the priest nothing but what is involved in his office, as a minister of reconciliation. But you will hold, too, with our Bishops at the Savoy Conference, that how absolute soever the form may be in appearance, it is in truth conditional, “though the condition need not to be expressed, being always necessarily understood.” “As for the matter of private absolution,” writes our own Hooker, “it can be no more than a declaration of what God hath done, it hath but the force of the Prophet Nathan’s absolution ‘God hath taken away thy sin,’ than which construction of words judicial there is nothing more vulgar. The act of our God alone remitteth, in that His purpose is never to call it to account, or to lay it to man’s charge; the stain He washeth out by the sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and concerning the punishment of sin, as none else hath power to cast body and soul into hell fire, so none hath power to deliver either besides Him.”*

Bearing these cautions in mind, we need not fear, whatever was the sense in which the Lord used the word “remit,” to regard the priest as a judge “in open crimes and public penance”†; and as a judge, too, in regard of sins against God, because he can

* *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book vi. p. 83, edit. 1820.

† Jewel, *Apology*, part ii. pp. 373, 381.

discern between sin and sin, though without authority to forgive such sins ; and we need not mislike private confession in the cases in which the Church permits it, though we regard it not as a divine ordinance ; nor the use of the indicative form of absolution as sanctioned by the Reformers.

Such considerations as we have urged, on the authority of Holy Writ, against the Romish doctrine of penance, and the doctrines akin to it, no plea of expediency can countervail. But even on this ground we do not fear to meet our opponents. We hold, that experience shows, independently of Scripture and reason, that the Romish doctrine of Sacramental absolution and auricular confession are not of God.

It is no vague “suspicion sown by the father of lies,”* as we are told it is, that makes us look with repugnance upon a system, which enabled Sanchez to produce his anatomy of vice, as loathsome, and as profound, as that evil spirit himself could have made it ; upon a system which developed the casuistry of Escobar. If men who are represented as devout† and austere, could gain such horrible

Fifth assertion as to penance considered. The plea of the practical utility of the Romish doctrine considered.

* This suspicion of confession may be sown by the father of lies.”—Dr. Pusey, “Sermon,” &c. p. xiii.

† Their personal character is spoken of with respect even by enemies : “C’était au pied du crucifix que le pieux Sanchez écrivait son abominable et dégoutant ouvrage ; et on a dit en particulier d’Escobar, également connu par l’austréité de ses mœurs et la relâchement de sa morale, qu’il achetait le ciel bien cher pour lui-même et le donnait à bon marché aux autres.”—D’Alembert, *La Destruction des Jésuites en France*.

Moral effects of Romish doctrine.

experience, or so palliate crime, in the confessional; it is no vague suspicion which makes us believe that priests, like those found even in Apostolic times, and too common in every religious body, "spots and blemishes," as St. Peter writes, "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls, and having an heart exercised with covetous practices," must, under their sacred character, be as successful in the destruction of souls as Satan himself, when he is transformed into an angel of light. The Bulls of Benedict and Clement are in our hands; and so are the laws against capitation, laws greatly needed, wherever the clergy have had such access to weak and superstitious minds. It is no vague suspicion, which makes us fear that he, into whose bosom is poured the whole moral pollution of a community, can hardly keep himself pure; or apply the dreadful knowledge in which he has been trained, without corrupting, or increasing corruption. There were, indeed, names in Sardis which had not defiled their garments; there are holy and simple souls which may, perhaps, like the Apostles of old, drink deadly things, and receive no hurt. A confessor of peculiar wisdom and purity may give useful counsel without touching on dangerous topics; but to do this, he must often violate the rules of the Roman Church. There are many penitents who offer no temptation to an impure or mercenary seducer; to many the ignorance or the apathy of a confessor

may prove a blessing; so that the evils of the system may not result in every case. I would even admit that sometimes the practice may restrain sinners; but it is a mistake to think that confession to man acts generally as a check to vice. It destroys delicacy, it deadens shame, it quiets remorse, and so takes away the strongest natural preventives of the first commission, or the recurrence, of crime. Confession to God, if it does not imply so violent an effort at the first, never hardens, never gives security to a deceitful conscience.

Long, then, may the holiest affections of English parents* be enlisted against the attempt to remedy evil, however sore, by the inoculation of the very virus which is destroying souls. May the peace and the honour of our homes ever be jealously protected from the despotic influence of "spiritual direction": an influence which, being more intimate and more habitual than that of the confessional, is, proportionably, more baneful when exercised by a designing or an injudicious man; an influence, too, which is not, like the other, peculiar to one creed, or limited to one age: since St. Paul found it necessary to denounce those "which crept into houses, and led captive silly women, ever learning,

Domestic
effects of
Romish
doctrine.

* "The deep suspicion fostered unhappily in the English mind, by which their holiest earthly affections are enlisted." "If religious parents taught their children to confess their faults to themselves, and then, at a somewhat riper age, transferred them to a minister of God."—Dr. Pusey, "Sermon," &c. pp. xiii. xvii.

and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." May the priest never be permitted to destroy the confidence between mother and child, between husband and wife, between friend and friend.

Social
effects of
Romish
doctrine.

You appeal to experience. Tell me whether the three great ends which the primitive Church had in view in her discipline, namely, to secure exclusive allegiance to Christ, veneration to the temple of the Holy Ghost in ourselves, and respect for the image of God in another, are best attained where the confessional is most frequented and the priest most powerful, or whether the contrary is not notoriously true ?* Where have fruitful lands been made barren through the wickedness of those that dwell therein ; where do anarchy or mis-rule, or both at once, more frequently prevail ; where do gross ignorance and abject poverty overspread society, if not in the

* " Voilà comme on entend la vertu à la cour d'Aranjuez. Au milieu d'une corruption dont on ne trouverait pas un autre exemple en Europe (tellement que vous croiriez que je mens si j'entreprendais de vous décrire ce qui frappe ici les yeux de chaque voyageur) les Andalous ont conseré un respect profond pour les convenances. Ils détestent les discours indécens et gardent sur les actes les plus scandaleux un silence de complicité qu'il serait impossible d'obtenir d'une société moins profondément dépravée. On se dit : le désordre est devenu si général, qu'à présent ce serait l'ordre qui dérangerait l'existence."

" Le clergé séculier est en général composé d'hommes distingués, profonds d'esprit et fermes de caractère, mais peu croyants ; depuis l'évêque jusqu'au curé, tous sont un peu esprits forts : cette nation veut absolument commencer à penser, et elle réveille à l'encyclopédie."—*L'Espagne*, Lettre 56.

countries in which Rome and her system are dominant? *

I believe, then, the Roman doctrine of Sacramental penance to be, in theory, opposed to the truth of the Gospel, and, in its practical tendencies, repugnant to public and to private liberty; baneful to morality and to religion; degrading to priest and to people. But it becomes hateful indeed in my sight, when I view it as an outrage against my Lord and Saviour. Where it is professed, He may be acknowledged as God, and King of His Church, but He is treated like those

Effects of
Romish
doctrine as
affecting the
love for
Christ.

* The mode in which the poor were relieved formerly in this, and now in Romish countries, is often put forward as a strong presumption in favour of a creed which leads to such results. But charity, among ourselves, is not only more judicious, but more abundant and self-denying; though in Romanist countries mere alms-giving has been largely, I would say inordinately, developed, under the idea of mitigating, through it, the pains of purgatory. But who among us can admire the state of things which this system has brought about, or the principles which actuate it? This is the account given by a zealous Romanist of its working: "En Espagne les mendiants sont le fléau des étrangers comme des habitants. On les voit obstruer les portes des particuliers qui font consister la piété à nourrir cette honteuse nation de fainéants. En Espagne les vauriens qui assiégent la maison du riche sont l'emblème dégoutant, mais quelquefois pittoresque et poétique, de la taxe des pauvres, de ce ver rongeur de l'Angleterre. Les âmes pieuses, qui croient les bonnes œuvres utiles au salut, sont dans la dépendance de cette population vagabonde, dont l'existence perpétuée par la religion est une dîme impérieusement levée sur les consciences. Ces membres de Jésus-Christ, ces élus du Seigneur, menacent de la colère du ciel et du peuple quiconque n'engraisse pas leur paresse. Privilégiés de l'Evangile, ils connaissent leur force, et ils en abusent; ils mettent à leur profit jusqu'à la répugnance physique qu'on éprouve à se laisser approcher par eux, ils vous menacent de leur lépre et de leur vermine. Singulier renversement de tout ordre raisonnable."—Custine, *L'Espagne*, tom. ii. Lettre 31.

effete dynasties in the East, which are suffered to hold the titles and the pomp of royalty; nay, are perhaps in some countries deified, but are retained only as cloaks for the usurpation of a rebellious subject, who thus enjoys the power without the odium of sovereignty. The priest is the immediate Saviour.* To him belongs the prerogative of mercy, to Christ only the prerogative of judgment. And, as an acute writer once said,† though he perhaps would not say it now, “The multitude of men are incapable of many ideas; one is enough for them; and if the image of a saint be admitted into their heart, he occupies it, and there is no room for God.”‡ So there is no room for Christ,

The priest
supersedes
Christ.

* The following proposition was condemned by Pope Pius V.: “Peccator poenitens non vivificatur ministerio absolvantis, sed a solo Deo, qui poenitentiam suggestens et inspirans metum vivificat; ministerio autem sacerdotis solum liberatur a reatu.”

This proposition also was condemned by Pope Pius V., in the Bull “Ex omnibus afflictionibus.” “Non soli fures ii sunt et latrones qui Christum viam et ostium veritatis et vitae negant; sed etiam quicunque aliunde, quam per ipsum in viam justitiae (hoc est ad aliquam justitiam) conscendi posse docent.”

“Auricular confession is the stronghold of the hierarchy; when it ceases, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church falls from its high estate; the Mass is not sufficient to make a priest, a priest in the sense of the Church; for every individual would not feel that the priest is the mediator between himself and God. We venture to ask whether a Church, in the proper sense of the term, be possible without the compulsory confession of the Roman Church.”—*Rome; Its Ecclesiastical and Social Life*, p. 74.

† Newman, *Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, on occasion of Tract No. 90.* 1841.

‡ “St. François d’Assise disait: Si je rencontrais ensemble un Ange et un Prêtre, je fléchirais d’abord le genou devant le Prêtre.”—*Gaume*, vol. iv. p. 312.

when the priest is always recurring to the senses and to the thoughts. And if the Saviour be called to mind by those who have not so besotted their understanding as to feel satisfied with the mere acquittal of a priest, it is not as the dispenser of mercy and a very present help in trouble, but in the odious character of a creditor, who brings to a rigid account his unhappy debtors, till then relieved from all anxiety, and that at a time when they cannot pay, and so delivers them without pity to the tormentors. It may, indeed, be taught in language of solemn reverence, that the Lord once wrought a great work upon the cross, the virtue of which gives power to all that is done by the Church, while from her, in return, it receives efficacy. But are the love and devotion of men, like their admiration for the heroes and the patriots who founded their liberties centuries ago, or for the present dispensers of honour and fortune? Much cause have we to think that the absolution of the priest too often serves only to draw down that excommunication which is indeed to be feared. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."* Love is for those only who are brought into intimate relation to us. When Christ is regarded as the author of our salvation, our present advocate, our only intercessor in heaven, our peace, our hope, our joy, our life; when faith realizes His presence, and we constantly pour out

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

our souls before Him, and feel blessed in the assurance of His sympathy who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and conscious of His comforting influences, then it is “that we love Him, though we see Him not ; and that, believing, we rejoice in Him, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”* Christ must be in us, and with us, and all in all to us, or He is nothing.

Summary. This examination of two adverse systems of religious doctrine has, in part at least, confirmed my opening assertion, that upon the answer which we give to this question, “How shall a Christian who has fallen into sin obtain pardon and peace ?” really depends the character of our creed. A few words more will fully explain it.

System of
the Church
of England.

Five principal causes are alleged, by various parties, as determining the justification of man ; causes which may be succinctly enumerated thus : The Blessed God ; the Lord Jesus Christ ; faith ; repentance ; the Priest. If you hold the blessed Trinity to be the sole efficient, the one Mediator between God and man the sole meritorious, faith pregnant with good works the sole instrumental, repentance unfeigned the sole qualifying-cause of the justification before God ; you must regard the priest only as what the New Testament makes him, a steward of the mysteries of God, a minister of the unsearchable riches of Christ, a dispenser of His blessed sacraments, a helper of our faith, and

* 1 Peter i. 8.

a preacher of repentance ; and in these characters a worker together with the four true and proximate causes. You reverence the man of God, as a ruler and a teacher, throughly furnished unto his good work, by that word which is profitable, as for doctrine, so for reproof ; as for correction, so for instruction in righteousness ; and you believe, as Cranmer and Ridley believed, as Jewel and Hooker believed, let me say, as Peter and Paul believed, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. You are a true son of the Church of England.

If you think that to God's grace you can have ^{System of Rome.} no immediate access, and that He must not anticipate, but has only to ratify the decrees of the Priests, His representatives on earth—that the work of Christ on the cross and in heaven is, of itself, ineffective—that faith is a mere preliminary qualification, and, as the practical necessities of your system will drive you to say, that attrition, the mere terror of one who has no love for God, through the grace given by the power of the keys, suffices for pardon, you have made shipwreck of the faith ; but the priest emerges, a Christ at his altar ; in his confessional, a God.* You are a Romanist.

* "Je ne scay si le Prestre doit céder à Marie. Peut-estre s'élève-t-il à la hauteur de Dieu....Le prestre ne porte le nom de Dieu que parcequ'il est Dieu....Cette autorité...n'est qu'en Dieu et dans le Prestre, et quoiqu'en Dieu elle soit principalement, et dans le Prestre comme dans le Ministre ; cela n'empêche pas que par la communica-

Antinomian
system.

If you keep out of sight the necessity of true repentance and its fruits, but dwell exclusively on the sovereign grace of God, on the merits of an all-sufficient Saviour, and on the efficacy of faith, you are in danger of the rock on which some of our Puritan forefathers split. You are an Antinomian.

Socinian or
Deistical
system.

If, lastly, your philosophy teach you to despise the doctrine of grace, and of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and, consequently, the instrumentality of faith ; and to insist alone on the efficacy of repentance to propitiate God, and to atone for past sin ; like too many of the clergy and of the Non-conformist ministers of the last century, you tread in the steps of the Deist Collins, or the Unitarian Socinus.

My second assertion, that the answer which you

tion qui lui en est faite il ne s'élève aucunement à la hauteur de Dieu.”—*Discours de la Première Messe du R. P. Théophile Raynaud*, in the Works of Raynaldus, vol. vi. pp. 624, 626.

“ Le fils répare le monde, appaise la colère de Dieu, détruit l’empire de Sathan, et ouvre la porte du Paradis que nos péchés avaient fermée, et cela par le Sacrifice sur l’arbre de la croix. Est-ce que le prestre ne continue pas le même sacrifice, quoique ce soit d’une manière non sanglante, dans le mystère de l’autel ? Est-ce que ce sacrifice continué, ou réitéré par le Prestre n’a pas la même vertue et la même efficacité. Que ne devons-nous donc pas penser de la puissance des prestres ? Hazarderons-nous trop de dire qu’elle va presque d’égalité avec celle de Dieu ? Ce qui me surprend c’est que Dieu dans toutes les merveilles de son infinie puissance ne dispose que de soy-même ; au lieu que le Prestre dispose de Dieu, et en fait comme à sa volonté. Encore une fois, Chrétiens, ne vous y trompez pas ; les prestres sont des Dieux—non pas des Dieux par essence ; il n’y en peut avoir qu’un —mais par une excellente participation de l’autorité et de la puissance de Dieu.”—*Ibid. Discours*, p. 626.

give to the same question ought to decide your choice of a communion, would, a few years ago, have been thought a simple corollary from the former. I have no wish to eject one holy man from our Church. I do not presume to say that those of our brethren who differ from us widely are not men of integrity. I judge no man who does not in fact condemn himself, by claiming to subscribe in a non-natural sense, or by a cynical avowal of disbelief of the formularies to which he has subscribed, or which he has to use ministerially. Let each man, however, judge himself strictly. It may be laudable to pause before we take a fatal step, and forsake such a Church. But it cannot be honest, in one who seeks to become a minister of that Church, to declare that he "assents and consents from his soul" to her teaching, unless he be prepared to answer, in her spirit, the great question which his anxious people will put to him every time he ascends the pulpit. And if our Church be generous and uninquisitorial, and confide in the honesty of those who give the subscription which she requires; or if she be, as some would say, enslaved by the State; are not her trustfulness and her impotence additional reasons for dealing truly with her, who, whatever may be her faults, has been to us a mother and a home?

But, though I speak thus, I will not fear that any one here will hesitate in making a choice, between God and man; between the Cross and the

On our creed
in this mat-
ter should
depend our
Communion.

Altar ; between the throne of grace and the confessional ; between the Holy Ghost and the schoolmen ; between the Gospel of Paul and that different Gospel* which is not another ; between the Church of England and the Church of Rome.

* Ἐτερον εὐαγγέλιον. δούκ ἔστιν ἀλλο. Gal. i. 6, 7.

III.

“WAS PAUL CRUCIFIED FOR YOU ?”

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1863.

“*Was Paul crucified for you ?*”—1 COR. i. 13.

It was Paul himself who wrote these words, and it was by the sword that Paul was ultimately offered up ; but if St. John had written thus of the blessed Peter, who did glorify his Lord upon the cross, would not the argument remain the same ? Would the contrast have been stronger between the objects of the death of Christ, and the objects of the death of that noble chief in the noble army of martyrs ?

And yet if, as Socinianizing writers have taught, the Lord died only that He might perfect the obedience of His life by the obedience of His death, that He might set His seal in blood to the witness which He had borne of God, and that He might thus produce mighty moral effects on the hearts and lives of men,—if the sacrifice of the Cross was not rendered necessary by something in the

nature and attributes of God,—what reason is there why we should refuse to say that Peter was crucified, that Paul's blood was shed for us?

Paul himself bids us be his followers, as he was the follower of Christ. Nay, greater things does he speak of himself, and of his impending martyrdom. He believed that he was to be offered on the service and sacrifice of the faith of his Philippians ; and that when he suffered, it was for the Colossians that he suffered. He believed, too, that he was filling up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ in his flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church.

But for all this, is there one among us who would not shrink from saying, Paul died and gave himself for me ?

What then, if you should hear me teach that Paul's blood was shed for the remission of sins ; that God hath set forth Paul for a propitiation, through faith in His blood ; that Paul bare our sins in his own body on the tree ; that Paul by his death made reconciliation for the transgressors ; that Paul gave his life a ransom for us ; that Paul is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world ; and that the blood of Paul cleanseth from all sin ;—would not such words sound like blasphemy ?

Yet Paul has spoken truly of himself. He did die, as he had lived, for our sakes ; and his martyrdom was a glorious sacrifice to God.

When, therefore, we read such things of Christ,—when He is said to have died for us, to have been made a curse and sin for us ; to have redeemed us with His precious blood ; to have been stricken, smitten of God and afflicted ; to have reconciled us to His Father on the cross,—much more is surely meant than that He was crucified for our sakes, in the sense of exercising salutary influences on our will and affections and conduct. We are really taught that Christ suffered in our stead ; that He bore the penalty of our guilt ; that as man's substitute He had to endure retributive sufferings.

The most momentous controversy which has ever distracted the Christian Church, a controversy of which the real issue is the truth or falsehood of Christianity itself, thus seems to depend on the meaning of a Greek preposition ; but it is not therefore a question about words, as one* whose lips should have kept knowledge, ventured to concede, perhaps in his love of peace ; nor is it a question to be settled by the kind of criticism which is content to assign to a word any sense of which it is positively capable, if it can only thus salve an opinion which it is resolved to maintain, against the natural sense of the text.

It is by reference to Scripture at large that the sense of the word must be determined. Our faith cannot rest on grammatical quibbles. It must be grounded on the evident sense of the Word of God.

* Archbishop Tillotson, *Four Sermons*, 1693.

I will venture to say that, to satisfy the meaning of the inspired words which I have before quoted for a collateral purpose, and of the multiplicity of other passages which it might be necessary to cite before a less educated audience, nothing less will suffice than the teaching of the Church Catholic conveyed by our own branch of it in the following words :

“ God sent His own Son to fulfil the law for us ; and, by shedding His most precious blood, to make a sacrifice and satisfaction, or, as it may be called, amends to His Father for our sins. And whereas it lay not in us to do that, He provided a ransom for us ; and so the justice of God and His mercy did embrace together, and fulfilled the mystery of our redemption. He could not by His mercy deliver us clearly without justice or payment of a just ransom ; but with His endless mercy He joined His most upright and equal justice. Upon God’s part His great mercy and grace ; upon Christ’s part justice, that is, the satisfaction of God’s justice ; so that in our justification there is not only God’s mercy and grace, but also His justice.”*

The question between the Church and those who impugn its doctrine, of the true and proper satisfaction of Christ on the cross, may perhaps be stated thus :—

Was that great sacrifice not only beneficial because of its effects on man, but necessary to our

* Homily of the Salvation of Man.

salvation by reason of its influence on the counsels of the Most High ? Was there in it something as real and substantial, when viewed to Godward, as there is when considered in its aspect towards man ? Was it a declaration only, or a condition also of God's remission of sins ? Did it both reconcile God to man and man to God ? Was it a penal infliction no less than a glorious martyrdom ? Did it secure the honour of God's government, as well by avenging infractions as by promoting obedience ? Was it the price of our peace, or only an offering of sweet-smelling savour ? Is the putting away of sin by the offering up of Christ the proper effect of an adequate cause ? or nothing more than the arbitrary result attached to an ordinance in itself powerless, as were the sacrifices of old time ?

Of the twofold aspect under which the Holy Spirit has presented the death of Christ in Scripture ; of its relations both to the nature of God and the needs of man ; of the two elements—one of which, namely the retributive, the penal, the vicarious, finds no place in the offering up of saints on the scaffold or at the stake, but is of the essence of the meritorious sacrifice of Christ, while the other, the heroic, the moral, the glorious, finds a place in both—even reverential Rationalists wholly deny or ignore that to which Scripture gives the higher prominence, and fail to apprehend the full import of that which they do recognise. In that covenant which Christ has effected by His mediation,

they do not consider at all the terms stipulated on behalf of God. As for us, all that they assert we gladly receive. We hear with reverence the exhortations to self-devotion for the brethren which they ground on the self-devotion of the Lord. We are edified by the eloquence with which they urge the claims of the life of Jesus to our warm and personal love. We exult when the glories brought on our race by the incarnation of the Son of God are worthily extolled. But we do not forget that the martyrdom of Christ has effects differing, not in degree only but in kind, from those which follow the sacrifice of His saints ; that Christ claims our love above all, because He loved us and gave Himself for us ; or that, after all, the cross on Calvary, not the manger of Bethlehem, is set in the foreground of Christianity.

Great indeed is the mystery of godliness. It has its roots deep in the moral essence of the incomprehensible God, and is in itself as incomprehensible to us as God is. Such knowledge is too high and excellent for us ; we cannot attain unto it. No human language can convey it adequately. Yet we may, if we will, apprehend savingly the wisdom of God in the mystery ; and the words in which the Holy Ghost teacheth it are words which will not fail to guide us aright. The economy of redemption has been brought within the grasp of faith and the practical reason by earthly analogies which enable us to understand with sufficient

clearness the relations of heavenly things ; at the risk, doubtless, of conveying also irrelevant ideas together with the true points of resemblance—a risk, however, which is reduced to the lowest point by the variety and number of the analogies employed; each limiting all, and compelling us to confine our attention to that which is identical or cognate in all. Thus we are taught that such as are the effects, in human relations, of the discharge of a debt by repayment ; of the redemption of a prisoner of war by satisfying his captor with gold ; of the endurance of his punishment by the criminal ; of the propitiation of an enemy by the gifts and submission of the offender ; such, in regard of the will and counsels of God, are the purposes of the death of Christ ; and on account of this similarity of effects it is that His death is represented as the price by which our debt has been paid off—the ransom for which the world has been set free ; the penalty endured for our crimes ; the gifts and humiliation which have appeased an offended God ; Christ, as man's substitute, having done what it was impossible for man to do, paid the price, provided the ransom, bore the adequate punishment, purchased the pardon.

But it is chiefly by representing the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin that Holy Writ reveals what it behoved man to know of the mystery of godliness. From the earliest times, whether by heavenly command or through the influence of

instincts which were an internal revelation, man had, under convictions of sin and a just dread of the wrath of God, sought relief by the transfer of his guilt and its penalties to a guiltless creature, and beheld in its death his own release from death, and in the flames which consumed the flesh of the victim and then disappeared, the wrath of God consuming and appeased. By express enactment, God, speaking through Moses, confirmed what He had before prompted or approved; and the pious Israelite rose each day with cheerfulness, and laid him down to sleep in peace, because he knew that the atoning blood of the Lamb had been poured out before God at dawn, and as soon as the shades of evening fell. Countless victims stained the marble halls of the Temple, and the groans of helpless creatures and the reek of their blood rose thence to heaven every hour, together with the melody of psalms and the fragrance of incense. That this "religion of the shambles," as scoffers coarsely speak, this cumbrous and costly service, in itself repugnant to cultivated reason and spiritualised feelings, had no real power, no intrinsic worth, Scripture itself loudly proclaims; but its wisdom is fully vindicated when we view it as a means of keeping deeply fixed in the mind of God's people man's inability to escape retribution without external aid, and the necessity of satisfaction to Him; and so to produce a sense of the need of a sacrifice of real efficacy and of a substantial

atonement. The death of Christ on the cross was the body of which the Mosaic ritual was the shadow. Its effects were in truth what the effects of the ancient sacrifices were supposed to be, the transfer of our guilt and the propitiation of God.

But if the sacrifice of Christ be only an arbitrary appointment, devoid of intrinsic efficacy and not needed at all on the side of God, merely an acted lesson to man, a stupendous system of means with no end which a simple declaration would not have answered as well, can we look on the economy of the law and Gospel as anything better than a phantasmagoria and a mystification ? Nor will the honour of Scripture be saved if we represent the death of Christ simply as the greatest moral act ever performed, the most stupendous instance of self-devotion, and therefore as an offering to God of most sweet-smelling savour, and the most powerful example ever set before man. Doubtless it was all this ; greater bodily torments have, however, been endured by martyrs with exultation ; longer sufferings wrung no cry of despair from the bandits at the side of Christ ; and we feel that His real grief was the grief to which God put Him ; and that the hand of God did not support Him, as it supported martyrs, but rather crushed Him beneath its weight. We feel, too, that this was the essence of that great act. Scripture stubbornly repudiates the defence indicated above. It dwells more on the prostration than on the fortitude of Christ ; on His dereliction

by God and the anguish of the hours of darkness ; yes, and so to speak, on the physical than on the moral character of His sacrifice. That which is effectual, that which disarms the Divine vengeance, is the blood which He shed; the precious blood, the redeeming blood, the cleansing blood, the reconciling blood ; and thus does Scripture mark, beyond the possibility of subterfuge, the retributive and atoning character of the death of Christ, the real, true, and proper efficacy of His sacrifice, as regards God.

But, indeed, this is scarcely denied. Candid opponents freely own with Wegscheider, a Rationalist of note, that the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ is found in the Law, and plainly taught in the New Testament.

Yet the controversy is not therefore at an end. It is said, and it is not thought irreverent to say, that the writers of the New Testament, Paul being their prompter, have devised the idea of a correlation between the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifices of the Law, as an expedient to remove the scandal of the Cross ; and made an ingenious use of Jewish and heathen prejudices in favour of expiation by blood.

What wonder, if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, that they call them of His household ? If it be consistent with reverence for Christ, to whom the Spirit was given without measure, to represent Him as ignorant because He

knew not that the alleged writings of Moses are a compilation of legends, true or false, made in later times ; and by no means, as He believed, of like authority with His own words ; it is no reproach to the integrity of Paul himself, or of those who make the statement, to say that what he calls the Gospel of the Cross of Christ is nothing more in fact than a pious fraud. Nay, human presumption has flown with a still bolder pitch ; and the Church once heard with sorrow her chief prelate, himself we believe sound at heart, concede in an evil age to his Arian admirers that God seemed “ to have suited the dispensation of the Gospel and the method of salvation to the common prejudices of mankind, and especially of the heathen world, by bending and accommodating the way and method of our salvation to our weak capacity and imperfect conception of things.” *

Hostile criticism can, however, find a more reverent and prudent course. Analogies, we are told, are mere figures of speech—metaphors rightly used, as the fancy of each writer may suggest, if only some casual resemblance can be found between the objects compared ; and the sacred writers have effected all they desire to effect, if only they raise in our minds, as we gaze upon the Cross, emotions similar to those of the pious Jew as he descended the Temple steps, or those of the ransomed captive when he is set free, or those of the acquitted

* Tillotson, *Four Sermons*, ed. 1693.

criminal as he turns from the bar. In all this, it is said, subjective effect, not objective reality, is to be sought.

But we have not so learned either Christ or the laws of language.* We hold that when the unknown or the incomprehensible is to be brought within the grasp of man's mind for practical purposes by means of analogy, it is not the resemblance, real or fancied, between the known and the unknown, which is placed before us, but the similarity in the relations which each bears to something else ; and that the process implies that the known and the unknown are equally realities. Thus we denote the attributes of God by words which properly denote human qualities, and speak of His wrath, His justice, His mercy, His power, His wisdom ; not thereby attributing to Him our passions, but implying that in the Divine nature there is something unknown and incomprehensible, which bears the same relation to His acts and purposes as the emotions and qualities of our nature bear to human conduct ; something as real and efficacious, as regards His dealings with us, as the corresponding realities of our constitution have with regard to our fellow-men. We feel, therefore, justified in speaking of God as of one who loves and pities ; as of one who feels anger and takes vengeance ; for otherwise God would become to us a dead abstraction, a being whom we could neither love

* See Bishop Browne's Sermons. Dublin, 1749.

nor fear, something below an Epicurean deity. We believe also that the blood of Christ had as real an efficacy on God as all that men deem most real and substantial has on men, as gold and precious stones have on a captor, and as money has in a commercial transaction ; and that, by the offering of Christ, God was propitiated as truly as an enemy is appeased by a gift ; but we know all the while that it is only in its purpose and effects, not in its intrinsic character, that it is a price, a ransom, an atonement. Reality and similarity of relations, not actual resemblance, is what analogy denotes.

But in controversy arguments are not always reasons, and confutation does not always produce conviction ; for real motives often remain unavowed, and thus wholly untouched. In the case before us, it is perhaps not Scripture which suggests doubt, but doubt which cavils at Scripture ; and the inspired writers require explanation only because they are too plain.

The real difficulty lies very deep, and may well startle men. The doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ rests solely on the authority of the Holy Ghost. We could not have conceived it beforehand, and, fully revealed as it is, and commanding itself as it does to the awakened conscience, we cannot vindicate it by an appeal to the principles on which man acts towards man. Opponents press us with the strangeness of a justice satisfied by

vicarious punishment, of sin visited on innocence, of a mercy which is bought, of the necessity of reconciliation between the attributes of God, of the moral efficacy of the bloodshedding of Christ on God and man. On this topic their ingenuity is not easily exhausted. Nor need we suppose that their object is to sneer away truth. Criticism ever bears the appearance of disrespect; and criticism which refutes premises by deducing contradictions, must seem to be sarcastic, for it gives to the premises the appearance of absurdities. We must admit that to man the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ is a paradox. But objections of such a nature fail to move us, whether they be earnest or scornful. It is not so that the Gospel can be set aside. It is of the very essence of faith firmly to believe on sufficient grounds, that is, on Divine authority, much which it cannot comprehend or prove; nay, to hold, it may be, simultaneously truths incompatible, or even to all appearance antagonistic. Faith is therefore always open to objection and ridicule. But faith* is as necessary a condition of mind in natural as in revealed religion, and in philosophy as in religion. By observing and generalising facts, man can arrive at science, at certainty of deduction, at practical utility; but if he seek to go beyond phenomena and forms, and speculate on being itself—on the conditions of being; eternity and time, space and place—on the

* *Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques*, Paris, Article “Foi.”

substance which underlies forms—on the true, the beautiful, the just in itself—he enters into the domain of faith ; he must hold what he can neither comprehend nor demonstrate ; he believes in a natural revelation, deposited in his intelligence, like instinct in the bird or bee, by the Word which lighteneth every man that is born into the world ; and he appeals with confidence to that revelation in other intelligences. He must assert principles from which a sarcastic criticism can deduce contradictions manifold, or he must believe nothing at all beyond his own existence and perceptions. Religious and natural faith differ indeed in their objects, but have the same Divine origin ; they require in the believer the same intellectual and moral temperament, and are exposed to the same difficulties and the same temptations. Many cases might be brought forward to show this. Take one. Men, with exceptions only that prove the rule, believe in a power which made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein ; a power which upholds all things by a kind of continued creation ; a power which rules in nature and disposes the course and issue of all events. Men, that is, believe in a Creator and His providence. But who can form the faintest conception of what creation is ?* If it be the act by which God manifests Himself as the Cause of causes, if it be the effect of His omnipotent will, can we conceive a will

* *Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques*, Article “Creation.”

which does not will, a cause that is inert ? And if we cannot, must we not conclude that creation had no beginning and can have no end, and that it is eternal and necessary as God Himself is ; but if creation be eternal and necessary, is not the idea of creation self-destroyed ? Again, we find peace and joy, amid the strifes and sorrows of life, in the conviction that there is a providential government which numbers the very hairs of our head, and without which not one sparrow falls to the ground. But to very children it occurs that fatalism necessarily follows from the doctrine of the government of God. This theory, in some form or other, has seduced whole nations, acute philosophers, and great saints ; and yet those who hold it, if they be logical, must regard forethought, prayer, action, as utter follies. And on the other hand, if a mocking spirit like Voltaire's, or a cynical spirit like Swift's, pursue the idea of Divine intervention into the trivial and coarse details of life, faith shrinks back to alarm. If again, like some philosophers, you fly for refuge to the idea that the Creator, having given the first impulse, ceases to govern, and like a constitutional sovereign begins to reign, leaving the real power to abstractions which men call laws, irresponsible to Him, and utterly forbidding His miraculous intervention ; or if, goaded on by an unrelenting logic, you dispense with a first impulse—with the original fillip, as Descartes speaks ; still you theorize ; still you

must submit to contradiction and a laugh. You will probably adopt some recent hylozoistic cosmogony, which proceeds, as they all, ancient and modern, proceed, on what M. Rénan laid down but the other day as the necessary hypothesis of his materialistic scheme ; namely, that in every molecule of matter “there is a tendency to life, and to a life more and more developed.”* You will perhaps, too, like a recent writer, gaze with benevolent enthusiasm on the masses of the Alps ; and behold there lurking a boundless futurity of organism and intellect, which, as time and place and temperature shall serve, will, in the course of countless ages, develope into plants, insects, brutes, sages, or heroes. In atheism, and the coarsest materialistic theories, you find hypotheses, and faith therefore, or credulity. Sensationalist metaphysics assume rational principles ; and the wisdom of man is no less liable than the foolishness of God to the ordeal of ridicule and a destructive criticism. You expose your fondest theories to the sun ; but an apish fiend is lying in wait, who tears them to tatters, disgusting but diverting. Yet they may be true for all that. Criticism of this kind, drying up as it does the fountains of our highest wisdom, is degrading in theology, in morals, and in art alike. It is found by its fruits to be earthly, sensual, devilish, as St. James speaks ; and men are forced by experience at last

* *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November, 1863.

to fall back upon faith, which is our highest, best, truest knowledge. God is really the only ontologist, as He is the only theologian. The Creator alone comprehends being. He who revealed the Gospel alone comprehends its principles. Our knowledge is precious and practical, but it is partial and relative, and therefore is not properly knowledge. But, as Christians, we stand upon a rock, for God's revelations are as sure to us as the facts of nature are to science ; and for us principles and facts alike rest on the authority of God. Our faith, therefore, cannot be destroyed by antecedent objections or paradoxical deductions. You can overthrow it only by shaking the evidences on which it rests. The sole question which should be debated between a Christian and a sceptic is, whether the Bible be the Word of God. The sole question between Christians is as to the meaning of the Word of God. If we who profess to believe act otherwise, we repeat the first sin ; we incur the guilt which is at the root of all heresy ; we seek to be as God, and hearken to our own wisdom, or the tempter's voice, and not to the wisdom and the voice of God ; we substitute, whatever be our creed, a human philosophy for a Divine religion. As for us, brethren, we accept, on the authority of God, the Christian paradox, that Christ died in our stead, and that our reconciliation was bought with a price. Such principles are not those of human jurisprudence, or morals. What then ? do not

apply such principles in your courts of justice ; freely give, freely forgive. The time will come when a Divine intuition will show why, in the Divine relations, punishment is “reversible,”* and remission must be paid for, that God may be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.

If such be not our frame of mind, a happy inconsistency alone can keep us in the faith of Christ.

For, as St. James points out, if we heed not what God has said on one point, we offend virtually in all ; for the authority is the same for all that He has enjoined or declared. But, blessed be God, inconsistency is not always fatal. It is, however, individuals only who can remain inconsistent ; principles never fail to force their legitimate conclusions on masses. What need of an incarnate God to die, if His death produced nothing more than example, evidence, instruction ? But if Jesus be no more than a messenger of God, and a man of singular wisdom and goodness, the doctrine of the Trinity falls to the ground. If, again, the crucifixion be only an emphatic declaration of mercy made to incredulous sinners, does sin really incur the wrath of God at all, and expose us to penal consequences hereafter ? What is Christianity, then, more than a clumsy republication of the

* The word is De Maistre’s. “Le genre humain a toujours confessé sa dégradation radicale, la réversibilité des mérites de l’innocence payant pour le coupable, et le salut par le sang.”—*Eclaircissement sur les Sacrifices*.

law of nature ? By such processes it was that the latitudinarian principles, which in the refined and generous mind of Tillotson appeared only as a just reaction from the excesses of opposite schools, and were capable of combination with all the moral and most of the objective elements of piety, fell by successive descents during the eighteenth century, under the impulse of more vigorous intellects, into the creed of Arius and Socinus, into the metaphysical theories of Bolingbroke or Hume, and at last into a coarse and reckless deism. They infected Churchman and Nonconformist, clergy and people, alike ; and degraded art, literature, and public life, no less than morality and religion. Happily there remained an open Bible, a Catholic Liturgy, Articles drawn up by men of deep insight in the faith, the obligation of subscription, which had been in vain assailed, the religious instincts of unsophisticated hearts, and above all the operation of the Spirit of God ; and thus our fathers beheld the restoration of that faith in which we find our rest.

We, I say ;—for I trust that all here have taken the good part, and that all believe on this cardinal point, as Moses and the precursor,—as Jesus, when He gave the cup which is His blood shed for the remission of sins, and when He revealed Himself in the midst of the heavenly throne as a Lamb slain, to the beloved John,—as Apostles and Fathers in the primitive Church,—as Leo and Anselm in mediæval times,—and as in times of reformation

Luther and Cranmer and Calvin, and Hooker and Andrewes, taught with one harmonious voice. For on our side is that combination of time, place, and number, which constitutes universality of belief, including all but those local, transient, partial heresies, whose pleas it bars by the decisive authority of an undeniable prescription.

The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God ; and no one who is conscious of the weakness of his own faith and of his own reason, and knows at the same time how terrible are the struggles which such antagonists, even when weakest, can carry on within the soul, will venture to reproach a brother. But humility and charity may unite in pitying the steward of the mysteries of God, who, with doubt and evasion in his heart, declares before God and man, each time that he celebrates the memory of the precious death of Christ, that Christ made by that death “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation, for the sins of the world”; and in pitying more deeply still him who is forced by strong necessities to eat the bread, while he denies the faith, of a Church which, in a homily of almost symbolic obligation, repudiates him by anticipation in terms like these:—“This faith the Holy Scripture teaches us, as the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion. This doctrine the old and ancient authors of Christ’s Church do affirm. This whosoever doubteth, is not to be accounted for a

Christian man, but for an adversary of Christ and His doctrine."

Sure I am, brethren, that the full faith of Christ crucified is required by our spiritual wants; and produces, by the sustenance which it plentifully yields, that witness within the believer himself, which, as St. John writes, corroborates even the testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood. In those dark hours when man is made to repossess the iniquities of his youth, when the arrows of the Almighty, the poison whereof drinketh up the spirit, rankle in the soul, a miserable comforter would he prove, who should preach only the example set forth, the witness given, by the death of Christ; for that example the sinner has not followed; that doctrine it is which condemns him. In vain would he be told that the cross is a declaration of unconditional mercy; for conscience, knowing full well that the wages of sin is death, and convinced that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, would give the lie at once to such a mutilated gospel. Let me hear, when I am on the bed of death, that Christ died in the stead of sinners, of whom I am the chief; that He was forsaken of God during those fearful agonies, because He had taken my place; that on His Cross I paid the penalty of my guilt. Let me hear, too, that His blood cleanseth from all sin, and that I may now appear before the bar of God, not as pardoned only, but as innocent.

Let me realize the great mystery of the reciprocal substitution of Christ and the believer ; or rather their perfect unity, He in them, they in Him, which He has expressly taught ; and let me believe that, as I was in effect crucified on Calvary, He will in effect stand before the throne in my person —mine the sin, His the penalty ; His the shame, mine the glory ; His the thorns, mine the crown ; His the merits, mine the reward. Verily Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my Righteousness ; in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

IV.

THE UNKNOWN SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

A SERMON PREACHED AT ST. GEORGE'S, LEICESTER,
ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1864.

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”—MATT. xxvii. 45, 46.

It is mid-day. For six long hours the Son of God has been hanging by His wounds upon the cross, amid the scoffs and yells of His furious enemies; but not one groan, not one reproach, has been wrung from His lips. He seems insensible to anguish and to insult alike, and cares for others only. From that cross, as from an altar, the great High Priest inaugurates, by pleading for His murderers, the office of intercessor, which He now fills for us at the right hand of God. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” From that cross, as from a throne, the Judge of quick and dead issues forth His decrees of mercy, and opens the kingdom of

heaven to a penitent who but a short time before had taken part with the revilers. "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." From that cross, as from a calm death-bed, the Son and Friend makes provision for the comfort of mother and friend. "Son, behold thy mother. Mother, behold thy son." All He has said, all He has done, is majestic and serene.

It is mid-day, and the sun is riding in his highest noon; when lo! a great change passes over the whole aspect of the scene. Darkness overspreads heaven and earth; the blasphemers are awed into silence, but the gloom which comes over His soul is blacker than the blackness which hides Him from our sight; a terror more terrible than the rage of man overwhelms Him now. This we surely know, though in mercy the agony which works on that visage, which was "marred more than any man," is kept from our sight, and we see no clots of blood fall to the ground as in Gethsemane. The fourth utterance on the cross at the close of the three hours of darkness, the despondent cry recorded in the text, reveals that, after man had done his worst, worse remained for Christ to bear. He has now fallen into His Father's hands. In His bitter cup it is not the gall infused by the malignity of the wicked which is the bitterest ingredient.

This awful incident will, if I mistake not, have a paramount weight in determining the judgment of

a Christian as to the main purpose of the death of Christ upon the cross. On this vital point, where we might beforehand have expected to find cordial agreement among all who profess the faith of Christ crucified, controversy has often raged fiercely, and is likely in our own day to rage as fiercely as ever. Well it may ; for here is the turning-point between faith and heresy. All who respect the authority of the Word of God teach indeed that, by His obedience to the death upon the cross, the Lord Jesus exhibited to man the strongest evidence of the Divine love, the noblest of examples, the most constraining motive to charity. But the Holy Church universal has ever found in the Gospel truths more momentous still, and mightier purposes in the economy of salvation. Well does our own branch of it expound the orthodox creed in words like these ; "Christ died, in order, by His shedding of His most precious blood, to make a sacrifice and a satisfaction to His Father, and to assuage His wrath and indignation against us. So pleasant to God was this sacrifice and oblation of His Son's death, which He so obediently and innocently suffered, that He would take it for the only and full amends of the sins of the world ; and that for the merit thereof, if we be true Christians indeed, we be now fully in God's grace again, and clearly discharged from our sins."*

But, by enemies of the cross who from without,

* See Bishop Browne's Sermon on the Agony of Christ in the Garden. Dublin, 1745.

and by enemies of the cross who from within, in evil days assail the faith, the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, the propitiation made by Him for our sins, the retributive character of His sufferings, has been with more or less boldness denied. The justice of God required no satisfaction, we are told, and the Gospel is purely a declaration of mercy. Christ did not die for the remission, but for the prevention, of sin. He did not come to seek and to save that which was lost, but only to incite men to holiness. The truth, however, lies on the surface of Scripture, and no sophistry can long satisfy an unprejudiced mind that our faith is not the faith taught by Christ and His Apostles. The only consistent course for one who denies the atonement of Christ, is to disparage the authority of the sacred writers, and to constitute himself their critic and their judge.

So long, however, as our attention is confined to the sufferings inflicted on the Lord by wicked hands,—sufferings which He endured in common with those of His saints who have been called to seal their faith with their blood,—to blows, outrages, torments, and death,—we may perhaps for a moment be seduced into the idea, that Christ was only the best, noblest, greatest of martyrs; and that the benefit which we derive from His death is, though greater in degree, yet in kind the same, as that which we derive from the death of other confessors; a lesson namely of love, of endurance,

of obedience, for His body's sake, which is the Church. Such a theory, however, will not stand the test of Scripture ; no, not for one moment. Paul was not crucified for us. We are not washed in the blood of Stephen. Peter did not offer his soul a sacrifice for sin. No man can redeem his brother. No saint is a Saviour. The sufferings which the Lord endured in His body on the tree are indeed distinctly, nay, more distinctly than those of which His sacred soul was the seat, represented as a propitiation for our sins, as the penalties borne by Him in our stead ; and perhaps the majority of Christians, while they discover at once in the Bible what is so plainly taught there, that Christ did on the cross make a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, never carry their thoughts beyond His outward sufferings and His bodily anguish, yet find there ample assurance of reconciliation with God, the full price of their redemption, and most sure grounds of peace and joy.

But has not God's mercy further guarded the cardinal truth of the Gospel, by revealing that in His passion the Lord had to undergo—besides those outward sufferings which, if needs be, we are all bound to bear—sufferings in which none can share or ought to share ; nay, the very sufferings which His death enables us to escape, the sufferings laid upon Him by the hand of God Himself ? If so, it is plain that to influence the life and feelings of

Christians was neither the sole nor the main object of the offering made on Calvary. Amends, as our Church speaks, were to be made to the justice of God. Prophetic Scripture had expressly foretold that Messiah was to be put to grief by the hand of God no less than by the hand of men. "He is despised and rejected of men," wrote Isaiah, "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;" but Isaiah says also, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief." In accordance with prophetic anticipation is apostolic teaching. "God," writes St. Paul, "God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin"; and when we are taught by the same Apostle that Christ was made a curse for us, we feel sure that more is meant than that God converted the evil deeds of men to His own gracious purposes. Man could make Christ a martyr; it was God only who could make Him a curse and sin. It was God only who could "lay on Him the iniquities of us all."

Surely such language expresses direct intervention, on the part of the Most High, in the awful mystery of the Passion. Can we otherwise interpret the cry of despair, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was that abandonment, not bodily anguish, which overwhelmed the Redeemer's soul. "Thy rebukes have broken My heart," are the words placed in

His mouth by the Psalmist. When He took upon Him to deliver man, and to bear our sins, He took upon Him all the penalties of sin too, the penalties of the soul no less than the penalties of the body; the earthly penalties, but also the penalties due from God; the wrath no less than the shame, the pain, and the death. Well does the universal Church in her solemn litanies implore deliverance “by the Agony and Bloody Sweat, by the Cross and Passion”; better still the Eastern branch, when she places besides on the lips of her children the more awful invocation, “By the pangs which no man can know, good Lord, have mercy upon us.”

In all this lies an unfathomable mystery. Human philosophy supplies no explanation of the Divine jurisprudence. When it is in God’s Word declared, that the Cross is a stumbling-block to the Jew, and to the Greeks foolishness, it is clear that no appeal is made by the Bible in the matter to human reason; that there is no attempt to represent the Divine counsels as within the grasp of our faculties; and we should have reason to regard as suspicious any statement of Christian doctrine which was not assailed by similar scoffs, and which was free from similar difficulties. We must accept this, like other sacred doctrines, on the authority of the Holy Ghost. “God hath spoken; let the whole earth keep silence.” All that remains for us is to believe, and by faith to be justified and sanctified.

Be it observed, however, that the mystery lies

not in the doctrine—this is plain even to a careless reader—but in the Divine nature, and in the Divine attributes which require so august a victim.* No child, no peasant, ever failed to understand that Christ, by His death, did as truly make an atonement to God for our sins, as one man makes an atonement to another for the offence of a third; or that the blood of Christ has the same intrinsic virtue and efficacy for the real and actual cleansing of the soul from the guilt and pollution of sin, as water has for the washing away of filth from the body. Indeed, no doctrine can deserve the name of doctrine, that is not plain and intelligible. What is incomprehensible, and simply an object of faith, is the great Divine fact which lies at the base of a doctrine. Thus we understand and believe that *God is*, and assert the doctrine without hesitation; but the nature of God, or the mode of His being, are as utterly unknown to us as colour is to one born blind. We understand and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—that is, we believe that He is the Son of God as truly as one man is the son of another; but the real manner of the eternal and Divine generation is utterly beyond the reach of the loftiest created intellect.

So it is throughout revelation. Our part, then, is to believe and adore, not to explain, much less to explain away, the deep things of God. Our part is, gratefully to accept the revelation, by human

* See Bishop Browne's Sermons. Dublin, 1745.

analogies and familiar words, of all that it is important and possible for us to know. Nor is that the case with revealed knowledge only. We know little more of our soul than we do of God, as it is in itself. We know nothing of the world around us but a few facts, and we impose on ourselves when, classifying our observations and calling them laws, we imagine that we have penetrated into the mysteries of being. Bear this in mind, and you will be modest in science, and humble as to Divine truth. Scriptural declarations will be as unquestionable to you as facts and axioms to the investigator of nature; and you will not be perplexed by the sophistries which a vain philosophy directs against the mysteries of the faith; nor will you seek to account for the Divine counsels. You will not attempt to show why, in order to give scope for His love, a God of mercy gave His only-begotten Son; why the sufferings of the innocent Head are held to be the sufferings of the guilty members; why the blood of Christ not only atones for sin, but removes guilt from the believing soul. Seeing the broad gulf which separates the incomprehensible mystery from the intelligible doctrine; the secret truth from its analogous representation; the Divine reality from the human conception of it; that which we now see as in a glass darkly, from that which we shall one day see face to face; you will be content to reverence the secret things which belong to God,

and to live by the doctrines revealed for you and for your children.

Above all, you will cling to the blessed truth, that, if you are in the faith, you are, in the eyes of God, one with your Saviour ; that you virtually suffered with Him on the cross, that you might share in His righteousness and His graces here, and be glorified with Him hereafter at the right hand of God. With all the great saints of God, who have recorded their experience, you will cling, under a deep sense of sin, and the sinfulness of sin, to that one truth which gives peace to the conscience. You will hear our own great Anselm of Canterbury, for instance, and find comfort, when on the bed of death, from the counsels which he gave to expiring Christians more than seven centuries ago. “Thou believest,” he said, “that thou shalt be saved only by the death of Christ. Come, then, while thou yet hast health, place thy trust in that death, put thy confidence in nothing else ; to that death commit thyself wholly ; in that death array thyself all over ; nail thyself to that death ; and if the Lord shall seek to judge thee, say, ‘I interpose the death of Thy Son between myself and Thy judgment ; in no other terms do I plead with Thee.’ If He shall say, ‘Thou hast deserved damnation’, reply, ‘I hold out the death of my Lord Jesus Christ between me and my ill deserts ; I offer His merits in lieu of the merits which ought to have been mine and are not.’”

If our faith be the faith of the Gospel, the faith of Anselm, the faith of all the saints of the Lord, we shall be at no loss how to apply to its special purpose of edification the special revelation of the unknown sufferings of Christ, or to give an answer to His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We know, and we are sure, that God forsook His beloved Son on Calvary in order that He might not forsake us. In tracing back his own spiritual history, that which above all fills a Christian with love and wonder, is the forbearance manifested again and again towards him by God. "O Deus misericordia mea, oblitum tui, oblitus non es": "O God mercy mine, though I forgat Thee, Thou didst not forget me." We feel that amidst our rebellions a watchful and tender love was brooding over us. The heavenly Father was near the prodigal in his orgies and by his swine. Every converted soul knows itself to be a monument of God's long-suffering. It loves to trace the mercy which checked, when passion was rushing headlong; the mercy which prompted remorse as soon as the evil deed was done and passion was sated; the mercy which obviated oftentimes the disgrace and misery naturally resulting from sin, when disgrace and misery might have led to despair, and "wretchedness of most unclean living,"* and final impenitence. Nor is the awakened conscience less aware of the Divine forbearance manifested in

* Article XVII.

regard of unacted crimes, or rather of crimes acted within the chambers of the heart and imagination —the murders of covetousness, the adulteries of the eye,—those more corrupting because more frequent crimes ; nor yet of the Divine forbearance manifested towards the more subtle but not less fatal causes of reprobation, selfishness, avarice, sensual indulgence, frivolity, pride, vanity—a reprobation more hopeless, often, than the reprobation of the harlot and the publican. In every such case the believer feels that not to aught in himself was due the long-suffering love which reserved him for opportunities of grace and the day of salvation ; and he discovers a special connection between that forbearance and the abandonment of Christ during the dark hours on Calvary.

The nature and the intensity of the sorrows which the Lord then underwent, who shall tell ? More grievous were they, it is plain, than the anguish of His bodily pains ; more grievous than the moral grief which caused Him to weep over the perishing Jerusalem ; more grievous even than was the cup which the Father would not suffer to pass from Him in the garden ; for the sorrows on Calvary alone wrung from Him a cry of despondency. Perhaps the remorse of a reprobate abandoned by God, the remorse which caused Judas to seek refuge in suicide, the remorse of a hopeless death-bed, approaches more nearly than anything on earth to those sufferings of Christ. But in perdition

only, in that living death, the death of the soul, the death which a horrible consciousness survives, the death from which there is no resurrection, will it be possible for the sinner to know what is meant by the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Something alike there must be in the abandonment of the soul by God in every case; in the abandonment of one who is actually a sinner, and of Him who was made sin, though He knew no sin. But how vast the difference in their consciousness. He who was forsaken on Calvary allows hope to gleam forth even through His despair, for He still claims a property in God: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But when once the awful words shall have been pronounced, "Go from me, ye cursed," and the separation is complete, and his horrible guilt is realised by the reprobate, he surely will not dare to utter this appeal, for a thousand voices would reply from the deep store-houses of memory, where all that has been thought, felt, said, done, is deposited for ever. Who will dare to rouse up those tormenters, to face the long array of frauds, and falsehoods, and hatreds, and envies, and profligacies, and orgies, and frivolities, and follies, and the other countless crimes which brought about judicial blindness, and the hardening of the heart, and final impenitence? Nor, if the soul still remain callous and unconscious of guilt, would even then the appeal remain unanswered.

Man neither saves nor destroys himself alone. If one of the lost should presume to question the justice of his doom, the voices of his victims, the souls which he plunged with himself into perdition, the voices of the innocent whom his gold, or his flattery, or his sophistry, or his example perverted; the voices of the children, to whom he gave life, and to whom he gave death, would, by their curses, tell him why God had forsaken him.

But, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we speak thus. Even if you be of those who have crucified the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame, our hope is that you have not been brought in vain to Calvary this day, and that for you the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," the prayer which converted the robber, has been uttered at the right hand of God. Of those who actually came to the sight, many, we are told by St. Mark, returned home beating their breasts. Will you not, too, my brethren, whatever may have been the state of your souls—you, who have this day looked on the sorrows of Christ, heard His intercession, admired His majestic endurance, and felt awe at the darkened heaven and the rending rocks, and quailed beneath the cry of despair, and heard once more that for you, even for you and in your stead, that you might be no more children of wrath, Christ was forsaken by His God—will you not be

melted by such love, and beat your breasts too, and claim that intercession, and lay hold on the great salvation wrought there for you ?

You, too, who, being united to Christ by a living faith, are in that blessed fellowship which makes the believer a sharer in the sufferings, and righteousness, and merits, and glories of Christ,—you too can make a special use of that most awful scene in the Passion. The sense of peace with God is subject to ebbs and flows, and the saint who one hour is basking in the Divine favour, is in the next heavy almost unto death ; faith failing, love waxing cold, hope turning to fear, prayer becoming cold and forced. One defeat by a besetting sin, the recurrence of remorse for former iniquities, a temptation to doubt, yes, and bodily infirmities, suffice to bow down to the dust the most vigorous soul. Then it is that we should especially remember that One there was who, though beloved, was forsaken, and offer from the sorrowing but believing heart, to a heart which has felt and can be touched by such sorrows, the powerful appeal “By Thine unknown sufferings, good Lord, deliver me. My God, my God, Thou didst forsake Thy righteous Son, Thou wilt not, Thou canst not, forsake Thy sinful child.”

V.

THE STUDIES OF OXFORD VINDICATED.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD, ON ACT SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 1845.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—2 TIM. ii. 15.

IT happens that a twofold duty is laid upon the preacher this day. The recurrence of an academic solemnity, once of interest, invites him to dwell with gratitude on the mercies continued to this ancient seat of learning, or to vindicate it against the criminations with which it is, like all other great institutions, from time to time, assailed. On the other hand, a considerate benefactor has provided that, about the period at which literary distinctions were formerly conferred with much pomp, we shall be reminded, on the authority of some one of the emphatic declarations of the Spirit of God which he has selected, of the end to which our studies must be directed, and of the means by which the peculiar dangers which accompany the acquisition of learning may be escaped. These duties are not incompatible. We shall derive

useful lessons, if in defence of the course of study which is here pursued, we recur to the Scriptural principle on which it was chosen, and on which it must therefore be carried on ; and the sense of gratitude for the blessings vouchsafed to us, which an examination of the state of our University must awaken, will be mingled with salutary feelings of humility and self-distrust, if, as must be the case, that examination shall force us to confess, that our blessings have, in many instances, been fearfully misused.

One more year has added to the experience of ages ; a year more than ordinarily searching and instructive for us. Increased experience has, I think, justified increased confidence in our academical system ; but it has also shewn to how great an extent the knowledge here gained may be perverted. We have been arraigned before one of the branches of the legislature of our country. This is painful ; but a little consideration will suffice to convince us that the charges which are brought against us by adversaries are, either frivolous, or such as we cannot escape, so long as we remain faithful to our trust. What is far more painful is, that many attached members of the Church have been led to doubt whether the learning which we impart be indeed useful learning ; whether the religion which we teach be indeed true religion. Can we assert that these doubts are entertained without cause ?

To those who denounce our studies as being below

the intelligence of the age in which we live, as devoid of practical utility, as miserably limited in extent, as fostering a narrow and bigoted spirit, we must declare at the outset, that there is no possibility of compromise on our part; no hope therefore of agreement between us, unless their sense of duty and their views as to the end of education, become such as ours. We hold that, in this work, the first consideration is to approve ourselves unto God; and we believe that our course is clearly pointed out by express revelations of His will. In our text, for instance, we see a specific direction for the studies of a Christian school. The paramount business of man is to become wise unto salvation; saving wisdom can be acquired only by learning rightly to divide the Word of truth, as the Apostle speaks; our instruction is directed to that object: need we be ashamed, if we adhere to a practice founded on such principles? We cannot act on considerations of mere human expediency, or look primarily to temporal interests. We are content to forego the elegancies of literature, and the pleasures and advantages of science, if at this price only we can become mighty in the Scriptures. We must not blush to say with David, "I am small and of no reputation," provided we can say too, "yet do I not forget thy precepts." "I have chosen the way of truth." "Thy judgments have I laid before me."

But does our idea of the main end of the

education which it becomes a Christian University to impart, imply that the genius of our youth must, in fact, be cramped, that any of the powers of the mind is to be lost here for want of exercise, that we leave to those who are indifferent or hostile to religion, the investigation of nature, the delights of the imitative arts, or the triumphs of physical science ? Not so. God has been pleased, as might be expected antecedently to the study of revelation, to unite inseparably the civilization of mankind, and the development of the faculties of the mind, and the love of all that is beautiful, with a vigorous Christianity. A perfect divine would possess in himself the talents and the attainments which are distributed among the great men of whom our race is proud.

Consider, for a moment, what is the Word of truth in its external form. It is not a mere string of moral precepts, an abstract creed, the dry rubric of a ritual service. The Bible is history—the only history of the greater half of time ; it is poetry—the chosen source of the inspiration of almost all the great poets of modern days ; it is deep argument ; it is philosophy. Thus it connects itself with every branch of human knowledge ; it awakens and interests every taste ; it finds illustration in every art ; it is associated with all that is striking in nature. Unlike false religions, ours rests on demonstration, and challenges criticism, and opposes every other system, and so comes into

collision with the most busy intellects, and arrays against it some of the strongest feelings of the human mind. It cannot fail, therefore, to develop the powers of its advocates to the utmost. Whether for explanation or defence, Christianity urges the chronologist to his calculations, the historian to his researches ; it descends into the entrails of the earth with the geologist, or scales the heavens with the astronomer ; the metaphysician analyses the mind, the critic deciphers manuscripts, and weighs syllables, in its service ; it inspires and employs the genius of the poet and the artist ; the proselytizing spirit which animates it, compels it to study every language, and to examine every creed ; scarcely any question—social, moral, or political—which it does not feel commissioned to decide. The Ministers of Religion, if ignorant or timid, may perhaps look on the labours of philosophers, and the spread of knowledge with suspicion and fear ; but Religion herself finds new confirmation in every discovery, and feels that she is best loved where she is best known. The Bible, then, and the evangelical system are so constructed, that they compel men, whether as friends or as foes, to enter upon the whole extent of human knowledge. Wherever Scripture is regarded as the sole Rule of Faith, and placed in the hands of all who will receive it ; wherever the right and the duty of private judgment are upheld, it follows, almost necessarily, that literature and science shall flourish, and civilization be perpetuated.

It is clear that a Church which rests on Scripture must, if she be wise, provide for the study of every science, and for the development of all the faculties of her sons. We may say it, without presumption, ample provision is here made for the wants of the Church in these respects; and we believe that every call which she makes will find an answer from the Universities of England. It is not pretended, that we desire our students to aim at universal knowledge:—nor do we think it necessary that all should follow even one of those pursuits which, though ancillary to religion, are not immediately connected with it. We must take care that facilities be afforded for such studies; they may then be safely left to the spontaneous diligence of those individuals whose mental constitution is peculiarly fitted for them. It is sufficient for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, if like the gifts of the spirit in the first days of the Church, the various acquirements of learning be distributed among the several members of the body, so that those acquirements shall belong in some sense to all. A system of education intended for a large number of men must be suited to the common wants, and to ordinary capacities, and must first secure what tends directly to the main end in view. Our object is primarily to form Christians and to train ministers of religion. The Word of truth and the learning which more particu-

larly qualifies men rightly to divide it, must be the great staple of our teaching.

But God has been pleased to deposit those oracles which are destined to enlighten, to regenerate, and to save men of every age, of every race, and every tongue, in languages now dead, and, therefore, as little affected by the changes and chances of the world, as the truths which they convey. Those languages must, in consequence, be studied in every pure and living Church, to the end of time ; for though versions are blessed to the salvation of myriads of souls, they are not the Word of God itself, but only approximations more or less close to it ; they cannot be appealed to finally in controversies of faith ; they ought not even to be used habitually in the study, by those who are anxious that their minds should be thoroughly imbued with Divine truth.

So long, then, as men believe that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so long must Hebrew and its kindred dialects command assiduous culture. But, inasmuch as the New Testament is of transcendent interest to the Christian, it is especially to the language and to the literature of the Greeks, that our youths must devote their nights and their days. To whom shall we go ? They have the words of eternal life. Nor is this a narrow field. It was not accident which gave to the people of a small peninsula, so happy a mental organization and such a social

development, that it produced in the course of a few centuries, the great masters of literature of every kind, poets, philosophers, historians, orators, who have been the models and the despair of every succeeding age. By their master-pieces it is, that men are strongly attracted to the study of that tongue in which has been recorded saving truth, and that they are, at the same time, fitted for what is as important as the intelligence of the letter, its right interpretation.

The Romish system which assumed its present form in the hands of the schoolmen of the middle ages, resting but little on the Word of God, almost hostile to it,—regarding that Word, at the best, as one only of the rules of faith,—avowedly recognizing as conclusive a Latin translation, and denying the lawfulness of private judgment; the Romish system, I say, may safely require little more from ordinary ministers, than an acquaintance with the latinity of Church services, of its text books of casuistical and didactic theology, and of official documents. Accordingly, at the time of the Reformation, the papal party opposed the introduction of Greek and Hebrew into the universities of Europe, and denounced the grammarians, as they were called, in the discussions of Trent. History, law, literature, the languages of modern Europe, and religion too, ensure the study of Latin by every educated man; but Protestants cannot be content with this, since they must draw

the waters of life from the fountains of salvation themselves ; and, therefore, must earnestly contend for the cultivation of the tongues which God has consecrated to His special service.

In all controversies of faith, we appeal to the Word of God as interpreted by reason and sound criticism. For this cause it is that an intimate acquaintance with classical literature is essential to the prosperity of the Reformed Church. While we maintain the right and the necessity of private judgment in matters of religion, we do not, of course, attribute to judgment at all, the presumptuous decisions of ignorance, or the fond opinions prompted by passion or interest, but, as the Word implies, only the well-weighed and unbiassed conclusions of a competent mind under a deep sense of responsibility. As regards the truths on which the salvation of individuals depends, they may be sufficiently elicited from any honest version by a candid man of ordinary capacity and diligence. It is not so with many of the points which divide Churches. We bid the student, therefore, before he applies himself to the interpretation of the sacred writings, devote years to the classical authors, to their logic, their philosophy, and their history. When he has matured and sobered his judgment, by exercising it on subjects on which his passions are not interested ; when he has formed for himself a code of critical laws and rules of interpretation, from which his habits of mind will not permit him

to shrink ; then, and then only, do we conceive that he is competent rightly to divide the Word of truth, and to become a guide to the people of God. It has been observed by the late Bishop Marsh, no mean authority in such matters, that those German writers who have scandalized the Church of Christ by monstrous theories, seldom unite sound scholarship to their theological erudition and natural acuteness ; but that the sobriety of our English divines is due, in a great measure, to the training received in their youth. Our Church has often been, and will again be, agitated by religious controversy ; but extravagant opinions do not long find supporters in her bosom, and a general acquiescence in the solutions suggested by Scripture and good sense, seems to succeed to the most passionate discussions ; and thus such controversies as admit of settlement, are settled more satisfactorily than they ever were at Trent, or in the Vatican.

It may perhaps be said that the system pursued in Oxford is indeed well adapted to the training of ministers of our Church ; but that the studies of a University, which is a place of general education, ought to have reference to the wants of all, not merely to those of a particular profession. Men dazzled by the brilliant discoveries of modern times, by the stupendous powers displayed by great philosophers, by the marvellous results of the application of science to purposes of practical

utility, would substitute Chemistry, Geology, Botany, and much else, to the studies which avail in our Examination Schools.

It is not indeed surprising that a father should wish his son to walk in the paths of Newton, or Lavoisier, or Watt,—the paths which are leading many living men to fame. But we must bear in mind that God has created but few men of inductive genius, and that no training can supply it. It is obvious that, supposing the natural sciences to be pursued by all, they must become for the great mass of learners, what classical studies are in a measure here, and mathematics in our great sister University, means only of developing and invigorating the mental faculties ; no one desires that the republic of letters should be composed of mere astronomers, or geologists, or chemists. We cannot think that these sciences are as well calculated to educate,—I do not say divines, but statesmen and gentlemen; aye, or natural philosophers themselves—as philological, and historical, and metaphysical studies. Let free scope be given to the mathematical and physical sciences, let ample rewards be bestowed on those who study them with success. Yet though we feel that able men should superadd some, nay, a considerable acquaintance with science to what has ever passed for a liberal education, we cannot give to science the principal place, nor can we even append much of such a character to our enforced and regular course. We may speak in the

same manner of modern languages and literature. Persons who have leisure and talent can master many accomplishments, without injury to more important acquirements, because the aids and appliances of learning have greatly increased, and are now brought within the reach of all. But the diligence and capacity of ordinary men, for whom all systems are designed, are probably tasked to the utmost by our present requirements. Perhaps some branches of natural science might, however, be allowed to take the place of one or two of the least essential of the subjects of our examinations. But our studies in general must remain what they are, because they appear better adapted than any others even to the temporal ends of education ; above all, because they are religious or subservient to religious knowledge ; and religion is the great business of all, whether they serve God in Church or State.

But, after all, and in point of fact, this University is a seminary for Ministers of the Church ; and if changes are to take place, they should be in the direction in which some steps have of late been taken. We ought, I believe, to render the education of those destined for the sacred office more professional than it is, by the general cultivation of the Semitic languages, by the substitution of Ecclesiastical for Profane history, and of a greater extent of Scriptural knowledge for some exercises which are confessedly ill performed ; probably

because change of circumstances has diminished their practical value. These suggestions I mean, however, to apply only to the case of young men intended for the sacred office, who do not aspire to distinctions.

We highly value, and defend earnestly, because we defend on religious principle, our system of education; and we bless Almighty God, that, by the providence of His goodness, we have been permitted to carry it out successfully for another year, and that we perceive no immediate danger of the overthrow of these institutions. We must not dissemble, however, that we have been deeply humiliated by not a few disastrous events which, whether rightly or wrongly, are attributed to the evil influence of Oxford. Painful though it may be, for obvious reasons, to allude to these things, we must not shrink from doing so, since we may draw from them some of the salutary lessons, which it is the duty of the preacher to inculcate this day. The Church distracted—its ministers suspected, and, as every day shows, not always unjustly suspected, of holding errors which we have all solemnly renounced—the laity, in places, most unwisely alienated from the establishment which they defended well in its recent hour of alarm—the return of separatists which was in progress, hindered—zeal for the extension of Episcopal government in distant dependencies greatly damped; these fearful evils are ultimately laid to our charge. I believe that

we can convince candid minds that there is nothing in the educational system of the place which ought to have produced such results. But none can be surprised that the country looks upon us with distrust, and that many parents do violence to old and cherished feelings, rather than expose their sons to what they deem religious contamination.

Who will venture to affirm that their fears are unreasonable? Can we deny that the revived study of patristic theology, which is one of the desirable consequences of the familiar knowledge of Latin and Greek now so general among us, has led also to the revival of much that is unscriptural in the fathers ; of much which the reformers, men far mightier in ancient theology than we, had deliberately rejected ? Can we deny that in this great Protestant University, which professes to regard God's Word as the alone Rule of Faith, the idolatries, and superstitions, and heresies of Rome find defenders ? Can we deny that divines, possessed of great acuteness, and trained by critical studies, have set forth as entitled to our belief and admiration, the childish legends which were apparently composed by men of unchastened imagination, in the middle ages, as idle novels are composed by such persons now, to amuse the leisure of uneducated minds. Is it not humiliating that attempts should be made by Ministers of God's Word, to introduce a fantastic symbolism into the sanctuaries which were cleansed, three centuries

ago, for the service of Spirit and of Truth? Is it not humiliating that the evasions and artifices which disgusted the world when employed by Dr. Samuel Clarke, and his Arian followers, should now be erected into a system, and unblushingly justified as evasions and artifices, by men of integrity in the ordinary relations of life? We must excuse those who conceive that there is something in our studies which robs the mind of vigour and manly honesty.

There are persons who, seeking to specify the causes of the evils which we have to lament, attribute to Aristotle, especially to dialectic as taught by him in his *Treatise on Oratory*, to the seductive imaginations of Plato, and to the great work of Bishop Butler, those habits of mind which have led some late writers to maintain doctrines pernicious or absurd, by what appear to men of plain understanding, feeble analogies, and small probabilities, and miserable subtleties. Much of the theology of our day does, indeed, remind us of the arguments by which Cicero, with apparent gravity, defends the superstitions of soothsaying in his first book on *Divination*. But it is not to intellectual defects primarily, but to moral causes, that we must trace the sad phenomena. Some ten or twelve years ago, when the State seemed hostile, and separatists of every kind, flushed with victory, were in league against the Establishment, it appeared desirable to put the Church in a condition to maintain its pre-eminence without the aid of

the secular arm, and to discover some criterium by which our controversies with assailing Dissenters, who profess to rest on Scripture as well as ourselves, might be summarily determined. A sacramental and priestly system, in exclusive possession of grace and covenanted mercies ; Patristic consent as its basis, and as an unerring authority in the interpretation of Scripture ; this, if established in the public mind, seemed likely to attain the end proposed. The fathers were studied ; but it was soon found that there is no consent on those points, till we reach the period at which consent sustains errors akin to those of Rome, if not identical with them. What ought to have been a refutation of premisses was fatally regarded as a demonstrated conclusion ; till finally Protestant principles, once strenuously maintained, were abandoned, and the whole cycle of Romish doctrine embraced.

Of those who have adopted the errors of that corrupt Church, some have followed a course which, at least, commands our respect. Others have retained their position among us, and find it necessary to justify conduct which it is impossible to justify with solid and ingenuous reasoning, and have accordingly been forced to recur to the weapons which the arsenals of dialectic assuredly supply for the defence of bad causes.

It is a mistake, however, to attribute to the studies of this place in general, or to those specially incriminated, the sophistry which has been so

copiously used. The case really is, that powers here acquired have been perverted for the promotion of ends determined by human passions. As to the argument from analogy, so admirable as a means of silencing unfair opponents, or of preparing doubting minds for the reception of direct evidence, it must continue to be studied, and studied in its greatest master, though it may be used illegitimately to establish positive conclusions. It is sufficient to say of dialectic, what was said in reply to a similar objection long ago, that it must be cultivated to set us on our guard against sophistry, and to enable us to appreciate justly argument in contingent matter. There are doubtless powerful resources which can be used for evil as for good; but the common-sense and the moral instincts of mankind readily detect bad arts, and revolt against them. A party which uses them is self-condemned, and must fall under the crushing weight of public indignation, in a country like this.

But, though our confidence in the system here pursued be not shaken by recent events, our confidence in the unassisted powers of man undoubtedly must be. It is very alarming to those of ordinary capacity and limited acquirements to discover that the best education, and great natural ability, and diligent study, even when conjoined with what appears to us, who cannot search the heart, exemplary piety, and self-denial, and zeal for religion, do not guarantee men against deplorable

errors in creed, and, sometimes, in conduct. Do not the facts to which allusion has been made read us a lesson of humility, far more impressively than the general considerations which might be urged on this occasion ? Do they not make us feel deeply our need of Divine assistance, and of that lowness of spirit to which Divine assistance is promised ?

We have all solemnly declared, before God and man, our belief that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith. If we honestly hold, and apply in practice this fundamental and characteristic doctrine of the Church of England, we shall assuredly teach no error, even if we shall thus fail of declaring the whole counsel of God, as Romanists maintain. But, if we feel dissatisfied with this criterium of Divine truth—if we set up any other, whether patristic consent, or tradition, or the decrees of councils, or the authority of the present Church, and yet retain the advantages and influence of our position, we are assuredly in danger of being left to our own imaginations, for we are guilty of fearful prevarication, whether we be right or wrong in our view of the Rule of Faith. Let us but be persuaded to swerve from integrity of subscription, in the least degree, and we may soon find ourselves in a position which we now think very lamentable.

But the Church of England is not wrong, in its view of the Rule of Faith. Holy Scripture is as capable now, as in the days when Paul wrote to Timothy, of making the man of God wise unto salvation, perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. We must not despair of finding and holding fast the truth, however much others may err from the faith. The text which commands us to study rightly to divide the Word of truth, implies a promise that honest study will not be fruitless. Only let us come to that Word without interested ends to serve, without fond theories to maintain, without personal vanity to gratify, content to follow whithersoever it leads, to remain in ignorance where it is silent, in doubt where it is obscure, and to acquiesce in a system apparently incomplete and inharmonious.

Let us then look well to our hearts, brethren, when we engage in the study of the Word of truth, or in the task of dividing it for the spiritual nourishment of the souls committed to our charge. It is often, but not too often, urged in this pulpit, that a right moral state is a more essential condition for the acquisition of Divine knowledge than intellectual capacity. If we be men of personal piety, our habits of mind will guard us against false doctrine; our thoughts will turn habitually to those subjects which alone will occupy us on the bed of death, the only subjects, therefore, of paramount importance — such as the exceeding

sinfulness of sin, the unspeakable mercies of God in Christ, the converting influences of the Holy Spirit, death, judgment, eternity, heaven, and hell. On all these things Scripture is full and plain; almost all our controversies are beside them. If we be unfortunately called upon to take a part in theological discussions, we shall, of course, do so with all diligence; but such discussions, however injurious they may be to men whose religion is not deep-seated, will harm us personally but little, for our minds will not be habitually employed upon them, but upon the great concerns of the soul. In holy men a kind of spiritual instinct develops itself more and more, which leads them intuitively to reject the evil and to choose the good, to discern between human figments and the truth as it is in Jesus, between the husks of controversy and the bread of life. Oh, brethren, may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know the hope of our calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

VI.

“LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH.”

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD, ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1845.

“*But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*”—1 COR. iii. 10–15.

AUGUSTINE* more than once expresses an opinion that St. Peter makes especial reference to this text, when he speaks of the things in the Epistles of St. Paul which are hard to be understood, and which unlearned and unstable men wrest to their own destruction. The context of St. Peter’s words is not unfavourable to the supposition of the great Bishop of Hippo; and we may acquiesce in it wholly, if the fact, that a multiplicity of interpre-

* *De Fide et Op. c. xiv. De Octo. Dulcit. Quæs. Quæst. I.*

tations has been given to the several parts of this passage, and that frightful errors have, from early times, claimed confirmation from it, be sufficient to prove the design of the Apostle of the Circumcision.

*In the days of Augustine, evil men, and men who were not evil, †Jerome for instance, had fallen into the dangerous notion, that no one who has partaken of the Sacraments, and who continues to profess the faith, can finally perish ; but that the very worst of Christians, after passing through purifying flames on the day of judgment, or, as some said, after it, shall be saved at the last. This heresy, which, like that of ‡Origen, of which it is a modification, is distinctly traceable to §Pagan and ||Jewish sources, was too well suited to the wishes of the natural man not to be eagerly embraced, when the Church began to lose the simplicity of her faith, and to decline from the purity of her morals ; and though alien in origin and spirit from the Word of God, it was fain, like all other heresies, to affiliate itself upon some isolated portions of that Word. Our text was generally fixed upon. ¶As a corollary from this error, it was maintained that the most profligate of mankind ought to be invited to baptism, though they avowed an intention, at the

* *De Octo. Dulcit. Quæs. Quæst. I. De Civ. Dei*, lib. xxi. c. xx. xxi.

† Hierony. *in Esaiam*. c. ult., et alibi.

‡ *Hom. viii. in Levit. Hom. xxv. in Num.*

§ Euseb. *de Præpar.* lib. i. cap. ult., transcribes from Plato ; lib. xii. quotes the *Gorgias*. Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 1. p. 735, *et seq.*, quoted by Lactantius and Augustine.

|| See Smith's *Disc. of Legal and Evangelical Righteousness*, p. 324. Ed. 1821.

¶ *Aug. de Fide et Op.* c. i. xv.

time, to continue in their profligacy; for it was thought that even if the teaching of the Church should fail to reform them, the damnation of hell would, in their case, be commuted into temporary sufferings.

*Augustine combats these notions with great force of reason and conclusive arguments from Scripture. He proves, what all now admit, that, at the last day, the whole race of mankind will be either blessed or accursed, and that for ever. What, however, he ought to have characterized as a presumptuous attempt to impose on the Church human figments, on the pretended authority of the Holy Spirit, and as a sinful compliance with the tendencies of a corrupt age, he is led to attribute to natural feelings of compassion, or to a laudable Christian charity. This he does, perhaps, because he is himself so far carried away by the tide of public opinion, and †by the wish to account for the general practice of praying for the dead, of which the meaning was forgotten in his day, as to propound, on other grounds, a modification of the prevalent error. He entertains an idea, that Christians who are not excessively depraved will escape utter destruction, and have to undergo only temporary sufferings after death; sufferings, too, which may be alleviated, or wholly made to cease, by propitiations wrought by the living. ‡Indeed

* *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xxi. c. xvii.

† *De Octo. Dulcit. Quæs.* Quæst. II.

‡ *De Octo. Dulcit. Quæs.* Quæst. I. *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xxi. c. xxvii.

he is not unwilling to allow, that those sufferings may be inflicted before the day of judgment, in penal but not material fire; that is, by tribulations of the same nature as the chastisements endured in this life. He has contributed something to the Doctrine of Purgatory, as it now exists in the Romish Church; though his own fantasy is different from it in essential points. But he has done service to the truth by protesting against the application of our text to errors like his own.

Romish divines grasp, of course, at the authority of St. Paul, as Clement and Origen, and Jerome did of old; but in defence of a very dissimilar theory. * “*Nota*,” says Bellarmine, “*locum istum esse unum ex difficillimis et utilissimis totius Scripturæ, nam ex eo statuunt Catholici duo ecclesiastica dogmata Purgatorium et venialia peccata.*” † As if Articles of Faith, to be held under pain of damnation, could be grounded on difficult texts! But St. Paul supports the modern deceit still less than the old; and it will not be hard to prove that, in this passage, he has a totally different object in view. If so, two “Catholic Dogmas,” and with them the whole Romish system, are in danger of falling to the ground.

It is not my intention to shew at length that “purgatory is a fond thing, vainly invented”; because I trust that it is needless to do so before an

* *De Purg.* lib. i. c. v.

† Aug. *De Peccat.* mer. lib. ii. c. xxxi. *Contra Petil.* c. v. xvi.

audience such as this. I allude to it, merely as it is one of the instances in which our text has been wrested by men to their own destruction ;—an instance quite as flagrant as that of Origen's Doctrine, condemned, on the ground of its demoralizing tendency,* at the Fifth General Council ; for the Doctrine of Indulgences takes away the fear of purgatory ; and the Doctrine of Purgatory takes away the fear of hell. How then is human wickedness to be bridled, and where are the terrors of the Lord ? We must lament the fatal perversions to which the words of St. Paul have been exposed ; it is consoling, however, to know that these perversions have not been uniform, but destructive of each other ; and that free scope is left us for the discovery of the true meaning. Had the case been otherwise, we might perhaps have mistaken consent in error for apostolical tradition.

Our text, then, has been perverted to evil, and so far the hypothesis of Augustine is supported. The many interpretations to which it has given rise seem to shew too, that it is hard to be understood ; but the plainest Scriptures are so to him who approaches them with foregone conclusions. If we come to this passage without prepossessions, we may perhaps succeed in eliciting its sense, though holier and abler men have failed :—“ Optimus ille Scripturæ lector,” says Jerome, who, however,

* See *Apology of the Greeks*, presented at Basle, pp. 66. 93. Ed. Sal.

violated his own rule,—“Optimus ille Scripturæ lector qui dictorum intellectum non attulerit sed retulerit.” St. Paul will be found his own interpreter. Moreover, we may be justified in asserting, that our controversy with the divines of the fifth century, and with those of Rome, may be reduced to a question as to the meaning of one word, and that Protestant interpreters differ substantially as to the explanation of one metaphor only. These two questions settled, all important difficulties will disappear.

The text is evidently figurative ; figurative in all its parts, say the commentators of the Reformed Church ; figurative in all but one word, say our ancient and modern opponents,—the word fire used thrice in two verses.* Bellarmine, however, maintains that the term is to be taken in three different senses, and that it is used literally only in the last instance. But many difficulties arise when the attempt is made to translate the metaphors into unfigurative language.† By some of the fathers, for instance, it is thought that the builders, whose work is to be tried, are all Christians, lay or clerical. The foundation is stated to be, one or more essential‡ Articles of Faith ; according to others, it denotes the§ Lord personally. The superstructures of gold, silver, precious stones, on the one hand ; of wood, hay, stubble, on the other, have been said to stand

* *De Purg.* lib. i. c. 5.

‡ Ambrose and Jerome.

† Augustine and Chrysostom.

§ Tertullian *Adv. Mar.* lib. v. c. 6.

for* good works and evil works respectively ; or,† the one series for merits in their various degrees, the other for venial offences ; or again‡ for sound doctrine grounded upon fundamental principles, as opposed to erroneous or injudicious, but not heretical and damnable teaching. § Some maintain that the metaphors describe the various characters of hearers, according as they are formed by a wise or unwise discharge of the ministerial functions. This is the point on which Protestant critics differ. On the other hand, as we have intimated, we join issue with the early writers and with Rome, principally on the meaning of the word fire. If, as ||Origen, and Ambrose, and Hilary, and Lactantius say, the word is literally used in the thirteenth verse, “every man’s work shall be made manifest, because it shall be tried by fire,” it follows, as indeed they teach, that bad and good alike shall pass through it at the last day ; Ezechiel, Daniel, Paul, Peter, the mother of Jesus, whom they expressly name. Bellarmine, aware of this, maintains as strenuously as we do, that the trying fire in that part of the verse, is an energetic figure which denotes the searching judgment of an omniscient God ; and he is reduced to find the

* Chrysostom in loc. † Pope Gregory I. ‡ Ambrose.

§ Theodoret. This interpretation was maintained in the days of Chrysostom. See Hom. ix. in 1 Cor. The great Archbishop refuses his assent to it for a reason which would convince few persons.

|| Origen. Hom. 14. in Luc. Ambrose in Ps. 36. Hil. in Ps. 118. Lact. lib. vii. c. 21. *Div. Instit.*

material fire of purgatory in the phrase “as by fire,” in the fourteenth verse, which is seen, at once, to be a proverbial comparison, denoting a narrow escape from a conflagration, with life indeed, but with a total loss of goods. Are we to say with *Chrysostom, that the word fire is spoken of hell-fire, which is to consume the works of the reprobate; and that the phrase “saved as by fire,” implies a terrible irony, and denotes the eternal damnation of the reprobates themselves? If the word be used figuratively, does it signify tribulation in this world, sent to wean good men from their too fond affection for lawful delights, denoted by the wood, hay, stubble, as †Augustine teaches; or does it allude to the examination of Him who searches the reins and the hearts, and whose eyes are therefore compared in the Apocalypse unto a flame of fire? What, again, is the day which is to declare the work. Is it the great day of the son of man; or that of our own death; or ‡this present time of probation? All these questions, and many more, have been raised on this passage. I allude to them, at the risk of perplexing perhaps, in order to shew how greatly the fathers are at variance in the exegesis of Scripture; and that we must rely for the discovery of scriptural truth on Scripture itself, and on sound criticism, rather than on their

* Hom. ix. in Ep. 1. ad Corint.

† *De Octo. Dulcit. Quæst.*, and elsewhere.

‡ Aug. *de Fid. et Op.* c. 16.

authority. Their variations shew that they knew of no apostolic and traditionary interpretations ; in which case only they could claim to guide us ; they had no helps but the Word of God and reason, which we possess as well as they. We have besides the advantage of living later, and of enjoying the stores of critical wisdom accumulated in succeeding ages. It is comparatively easy now, to discriminate between what is valuable and what is worthless in their labours. Let us proceed to do so as regards our text.

The object of St. Paul, in this as in many other passages of his Epistle, is to maintain his claims and to defend his character as a Minister of the Gospel ; and to lower the pretensions of other teachers who had succeeded in superceding him in the affection of his children in Christ, and in rending the Church into factions. His whole argument implies that the artificers are not ordinary Christians, but spiritual Pastors. He expressly calls himself the “wise master builder” ; and them “labourers together with God,” engaged in building on the foundation laid by him. The people, on the other hand, are the workmanship of the builders ; the superstructure of gold, silver, precious stones, or that of wood, hay, stubble. We are labourers ; “ye are God’s building,” he says expressly, “ye are the temple of God.” And in another Epistle, “Destroy not the work of God,” (which is explained in a subsequent verse) by the

words “Destroy not him for whom Christ died.” Hearers, then, according as they are either brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or rendered mere carnal professors, having a form of godliness indeed, but denying the power thereof; these are here called the work of the labourers, as Christians are called the work of God Himself, in the Epistle to the Romans.

There is no instance, in Scripture, I believe, in which doctrines are called either the work of God or the work of man; nor will doctrines, but men, (as formed indeed by doctrine,) be the objects of the judgment of the last day. The Apostle is evidently contrasting two erections; the one a magnificent pile like that reared on Mount Sion, and constructed of materials proof against the flames, with the miserable abodes of poverty, mere frames of timber, stuffed with hay, and thatched with stubble, which a spark can reduce to ashes. His meaning in our text is well illustrated by those passages, (one of which occurs immediately afterwards,) in which he compares the Church to a temple, of which Christ is the foundation and chief cornerstone, Christians the living stones, and the Spirit the indwelling Deity. The word Christ is, no doubt, used figuratively, in another Epistle, to denote his religion; but there is no occasion for departing from the literal sense in this place. When he says, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus,” the Apostle does not

intend to contrast essential Articles of the Faith with doctrines deduced from them by each teacher; but the great head of the Church with his subordinate agents, whose ambition led them to attach partisans to themselves, and thus to derogate from his exclusive claims to the allegiance of his people. The contrast is expressly drawn in the same chapter. "All things are yours," "whether Paul or Apollos"; "and ye are Christ's." We have shewn above, that the superstructure represents Christians; and we may also assert, as consistency requires, that the foundation on which it is built, is the Lord Himself.

Such as the fuel is, such must be the fire. But gold, silver, precious stones; wood, hay, stubble, are figurative terms. Is it not strange that the fire should ever have been supposed to be a material thing? It is evidently used to denote the searching judgment of the Lord; and the day is here, as elsewhere, the great day of His coming. Compare the fifth verse of the fourth chapter of the same Epistle. "Therefore judge nothing until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; then shall every man have praise of God." Salvation as by fire (a popular proverb) is the narrow escape of the Pastor who has failed to save those who heard him, though sincere himself in the main, and personally religious; who, therefore, through the mercy of

God in Christ shall, though narrowly, escape condemnation, but shall lose the fruit of his labour.

The meaning of St. Paul in the whole passage may perhaps be thus set forth. Why are ye puffed up for one against another ? Why glory in men ? These men are not your redeemers ;—you belong to Christ, not to them ; they are only your servants and mere instruments in the hand of God. In themselves they are nothing, however successful ; for it is God who giveth the increase. They dare not profess to gain adherents for themselves, but for Christ. For Him they labour ; a glorious office if a man take heed how he discharges it. If by faithful doctrine, by wise government, by godly admonition, by holy example, they shall be enabled to present to Christ a Church unblamable in His sight, they shall receive a reward ; if, on the other hand, they can shew unfruitful hearers only,—men unsound in faith and in life,—who cannot endure the ordeal of the great day ; they shall have the grief of seeing those perish for whom Christ died, and for whom they laboured ; and so far from giving their account with joy, they shall hardly escape themselves.

The lesson which we here gain, and which we might lose, if we hearkened to the fantastic interpretations of the fathers and of Rome is, that noble hopes are held forth to the successful Ministers of Christ : while loss and peril await him who shall not so take heed to himself and to

the doctrine, as finally to work out the salvation of the souls committed to his charge.

The Apostle sets forth a glorious hope to animate the man of God. "If any man's work abide which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward." Recompense is held out in the New Testament, not to the mere observance of positive duty, still less to abstinence from evil, as the Jews taught, but to the self-denial, and the devotion, and the exertions of the people of God, in the service, and for the sake, of Christ. But not a cup of cold water so bestowed can lose its reward. The holy avarice, the lofty ambition, which it is God's pleasure to encourage in His servants, Ministers of the Gospel are, more than others, permitted to feel. To the Apostles, as the chief instruments in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, are promised thrones on the right hand and on the left of their Lord: but all that are "wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars; for ever and ever." "Feed the flock of God," says St. Peter, to elders, "and when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." To the same effect is the parable in which the gain of ten pounds is rewarded with authority over ten cities, the gain of five, with authority over five cities; a difference of reward proportioned to different degrees of success.

It might seem that a Christian, who believes in heaven and hell, and who is taught that God has placed it in his power to rescue souls from eternal misery, and to bring them to a blessed immortality, requires no other motives than his convictions. The faintest hope of success might be thought enough to fire us with zeal in a cause which brought down the Saviour to die upon the cross. "I believed, and therefore have I spoken," said David; "we having the same spirit of faith, we also believe, and therefore speak," writes St. Paul, when accounting for his zeal in his laborious and painful ministry;—such is the constraining motive of Prophets and Apostles. And it is not only among men and upon earth, that the same disinterested love of souls is found. The angels of God rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, and minister to the heirs of salvation. The rich man in hell too, would fain have done something for others when he could do nothing for himself, and might have found solace in his torments, if he could have obtained for his brethren another opportunity of escaping from his horrible doom. Nay, it is the fundamental truth of our faith, that the Eternal Himself, who best knows what it is for a soul to be saved, and for a soul to perish, was moved by His love, to submit to degradation and to death for us.

Unbelief alone can account for apathy in any thing that regards the salvation of man. But God

has not left ministerial faithfulness to depend on the highest considerations alone ; He has been pleased to enlist all our nature in His service, and to give us a personal interest in success. If, like the saints of old, we have respect unto the recompence of reward, we shall be content to do and to suffer all that His cause may demand ; to forego lawful enjoyments and worldly distinction and domestic happiness whenever His work requires it ; to toil, as avarice makes her slaves to toil ; to strive as ambition strives, without respite, or regard to consequences, if thus we can win souls. The praise of God bestowed at the judgment-day, before men and angels—the praise which will confer honour and immortality when the triumphs of valour, the works of genius, and the pride of empire, shall be remembered only with pity, the praise of God,—nothing less is offered to the humblest servant of Christ.

But who is sufficient for these things ? Not the holiest, not the wisest of men. Our ability is of God. But from Him we have all that qualified the Apostles to convert the nations, miraculous powers excepted, which were given for a temporary purpose. We have the same converting and sanctifying Word,—the same covenanted presence of our Lord,—the same life-giving Spirit. We, too, can preach Christ crucified, and remission of sins in His blood, and so give peace to the troubled soul. We still wash in the laver of regeneration ; still break the bread,

and bless the cup, which are the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ. Surely God is not an austere Master when He expects to reap where He has thus sowed. Indeed, the danger is not that devoted and holy Ministers of Christ should be without influence, but that they should acquire more than man ought to possess over man ; that they should become a law and a creed to their people ; that is, virtually supersede Christ and His Word in their hearts. “Woe to the idol shepherd,”* and “Cursed be he that trusteth in man,” saith the jealous God, who will not give His glory to another, nor suffer the faith of His people to stand in the wisdom of men. To the excessive veneration of Christians for the Church and her Ministers, was due in a great measure the corruption of doctrine and the sacerdotal tyranny, of which we feel the effects to this day.

But while the text contains strong motives to zeal and laboriousness, it cannot fail to make Ministers of Christ tremble at their responsibility. The case is here supposed of a Pastor, who having himself lived in the faith and fear of God, is yet in danger of losing his own soul, because his flock shall be unable to endure the ordeal of the last day, and shall therefore pass to the left hand of the judge. But if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? What will become of him who far from being a

* Zech. x. 17. Pastor et idolum.—Vulg. Trans.

fellow-worker with God, is a minister of Satan ; of him who, instead of condemning the world, as a preacher of righteousness, abets it in its guilt and folly, and emboldens weak brethren into sinful compliance by his example ; of him who compasses the altar for the sake of the gold that is thereon ; of him, who makes religion a ladder for his ambition ? Where shall they appear, these sons of Eli, whose avarice or sensuality cause men to abhor the Church of God ? We would fain hope, that there are here but few Ministers of Christ for whom such language is needed. The text does not apply to them.

It applies to men who have sought with honesty and zeal to build well on the foundation, but who have failed by their own fault indeed,* yet without gross criminality, and from defects not always incompatible with personal religion. There are many such defects ; indeed almost all heresies originate in a zeal not according to knowledge. The Apostle seems to intimate in this Epistle, that his Corinthians had been spoiled by the enticing words of men's wisdom ; yet eloquence may be a valuable instrument in the hands of a man of God, —who would not be an Apollos,—and he who is so gifted, may be little aware that his words are to those who sit before him,† “as the people of God,

* *Impune erratur, nisi delinquatur ; quamvis errare delinquere est.*
—*Tert. de Præsc. Hæret. c. 11.*

† *Ez. xxxiii. 31.*

but as the very lovely song of him that hath a pleasant voice." The teachers at Corinth seem to have endeavoured to give to Christian truth something of the attractiveness of Grecian philosophy. They imagined that they did the Gospel service ; but, in reality, they robbed it of its Divine power, and formed only carnal disputants. They fostered factions ; thinking, perhaps, that they were only gaining adherents to the cause of truth. They tolerated gross vice in a powerful member of the Church, and so corrupted the whole body ; but they may have conceived that Christian prudence required such forbearance. The temptations of Satan are very subtle ; he succeeds by transforming himself into an angel of light, and deceives by the appearance of goodness. One of the fathers has well observed, that the authors of heresy have sometimes been saved, when their followers have perished.

To a Minister who is not unworthy of his vocation, the threat here held forth, that those who should have been his hope, and joy, and crown, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, will prove a cause of shame and sorrow, is more alarming than the most awful denunciations to ungodly priests. The thought that unguarded conduct, a liberty in which he has indulged, the effect of some human passion which he has permitted to sway him, may destroy the work of God, and cause one to perish, for whom Christ died, must surely make him

watchful. With what anxiety will he give heed to the doctrine, knowing that thus it is that he must save himself and them that hear him? And if he shall perceive that he has, through ignorance, preached what is at variance with the Oracles of God; if he shall feel called upon to build up the things which he once destroyed, and so to make himself a transgressor; if at each stage of his variations, he shall have made converts who will not follow him onward, to what he regards as truth, can such a man escape deep anguish, or judge himself pure from the blood of those who shall perish in the errors which he has taught them? Can he think, without shuddering, of the mental distress and the doubts, perhaps the scepticism, which his vacillations must leave in the minds which he once guided?

But, alas! men seem to glory in changes of opinion, however extreme, and love to proclaim them to the world, as if they were benefactors to truth, and to the Church of Christ; instead of retiring, as in many cases they ought, into modest and penitential silence. Teachers who change their creed, should ever remember that the change proves, more or less strongly, their incapacity to guide others; and that, however laudable it may be in a scholar to grow in knowledge, yet a Master in Israel must not assume his office without such preparation as will ensure steadfastness. To be ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of

the truth, is laid down by the Apostle as an indication of a corrupt mind, and a proof of manifest folly.

A tale is told by Lord Clarendon, in his life,* which is worth the attention of all who govern souls; of this I will venture to quote a part. “Mr. Chillingworth,” says the noble historian, “had arrived to so great a mastery in disputation, “as he was inferior to no man in those skirmishes; “but he had with his notable perfection in this “exercise contracted such an irresolution and habit “of doubting, that by degrees he grew a sceptic, “at least in the mysteries of faith. This made “him, from first wavering in religion, and indulging “to scruples, to reconcile himself too soon to the “Church of Rome, and carrying still his own “inquisitiveness about him, without any resignation “to their authority, (which is the only temper that “can make that Church sure of its proselytes,) “having made a journey to St. Omer’s, purely to “perfect his conversion by the conversation of those “that had the greatest name, he found as little “satisfaction there; and returned with as much “haste from them. Whilst he was in perplexity, “or rather some passionate disinclination to the “religion he had been educated in, he had the “misfortune to have much acquaintance with one “Mr. Lewgar, a Minister of that Church,” (that is of the Church of England,) “a man of competency

* Vol. i. p. 55.

"of learning in those points most controverted
 "with the Romanists, but of no acute parts of wit
 "or judgment, and wrought so far upon him, by
 "weakening and enervating those arguments by
 "which he found he was governed, (as he had all
 "the logic and rhetoric that was necessary to
 "persuade very powerfully men of the greatest
 "talents,) that the poor man, not able to live long
 "in doubt, too hastily deserted his own Church,
 "and betook himself to the Roman; nor could
 "all the arguments of Mr. Chillingworth make
 "him pause in the expedition he was using, or
 "seduce him from that Church after he had given
 "himself to it; but he had always a great
 "animosity against him, for having (as he said) so
 "unkindly betrayed him and carried him into
 "another religion, and there left him." If Chilling-
 worth did not finally become hardened by his
 scepticism, if he retained any thing of the candour
 and innocence attributed to him by his friend,
 must not these reproaches have rankled in his
 conscience like the arrows of the Almighty, the
 poison whereof drinketh up the spirit? Must he
 not have almost despaired of his own salvation,
 when he thought of the trusting soul which he had
 led to apostacy, perhaps to perdition, as there is
 cause to fear? Must he not have dreaded his
 curses, when they should both appear before the
 judgment-seat of Christ?

The ministration of righteousness, then, is

exceedingly glorious,* but most perilous. Many of us have chosen it, with or without vocation. It is too late to say to those who have taken the vows: “My brethren, be not many masters, (*διδάσκαλοι*,) knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.” Whether we were truly called, or whether we lied to the Holy Ghost, a necessity is laid upon us; “yea, woe unto us, if we preach not the Gospel.”† Though the conversion of evil Ministers is rare, because habit hardens them against the influence of those truths and ordinances by which other men are reclaimed; yet if the grace of God have so wrought upon one who originally intruded into the sacred office, as to fill him with compunction, there is hope that the grace which awakens will also strengthen. He who has cause to fear that souls have perished through his sin or his incapacity, will indeed sow in tears all his life, yet even he may reap in joy, and bear the sheaves in his bosom unto the garners of God, and be himself partaker of the fruits. But such an one must, if possible, beyond all others, “approve himself a Minister of God, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God.”

But our language must be different to those who are yet free. If it be a crime in him who is commissioned to send labourers into the Lord’s

* 2 Cor. iii. 9.

† 1 Cor. ix. 16.

vineyard, to lay hands suddenly on any man, are they innocent who seek for the imposition of hands without first examining and proving themselves, whether they be in the faith, and whether they be cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary? Upon your deeds and upon your words, the eternal destiny of souls redeemed by the cross of Christ is made to depend, by the inscrutable counsels of God. The blood of your brethren will be required at your hands; you may become partakers of other men's sins.

Take heed then to yourselves, young men. Your moral character is every day hardening into maturity. If now you pollute your soul and body by vice;—if you enervate your intellect by indolence and pleasure;—if you bring a blight on your good name by ignoble dissipation, will you dare to profane, by such an offering, the altar of Him who hath said, “Cursed be the deceiver which vowed and sacrificed unto the Lord a corrupt thing?”* If you cannot now bring your bodies into subjection; if you cannot labour conscientiously; if self-denial be intolerable; if prayer be strange to your lips, and the service of God a weariness, abandon all thoughts of the ministry. Better to begin life anew, better to disappoint the expectation of friends than to bring on yourselves the curse of God. If you have lived in sin, pause before you cross the threshold of the temple; “it

* Mal. i. 14.

appertaineth not to you to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated. Go out of the sanctuary, for ye have trespassed ; neither shall it be for your honour from the Lord God.”*

But if in possession of liberty you are a law unto yourselves ; if, under the influence of Divine grace, you can flee youthful lusts, when corrupt example or the arts of the tempter embolden your timidity and inflame your passions ; if increasing docility and laboriousness attest your fitness for the yoke of Christ ; if you find delight in communion with God,—go forth, in all humility, yet in faith and hope ; you shall be blessed in your deed ; you will be found in the house of God vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.

But it is not by your life alone that you must prepare yourselves to save souls. †The law of truth must be in your mouths, and your lips must keep knowledge, if you would turn many from iniquity, and be messengers of the Lord of Hosts. Truth is the weapon with which you must go forth to conquer ; on the contrary, it is by turning men from the truth unto fables, that the father of lies, who was a murderer from the beginning, defeats the purposes of God. Your teaching will be a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. What its character shall be depends, in a great

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 18.

† Mal. ii. 6, 7.

measure, on your employment of the precious time which you are permitted to spend in this school of the Prophets. If now you give attendance to reading, you may hope to be enabled hereafter to give attendance to exhortation and to doctrine.

Not that we would have you perplex your minds with the questions which gender strife. No ; those who are modest enough to feel, that as yet they are but babes, and unskilful in the word of righteousness, will close their ears against the enticements and disputings of men of corrupt minds. It is young and inexperienced, but ardent and generous men who fall a prey to deceivers. Be content for a while to hold the faithful word as you have been taught, and the full age will come when, by reason of use, you will be exercised to discern both good and evil. All that is needful now is that you should, on the one hand, diligently follow that course of study which experience has proved to be the best calculated to invigorate your faculties, and to mature your judgment ; and, on the other hand, that you should acquire, by obedience to the will of God, those moral dispositions without which no man can receive wisdom from above, or be really able to know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. You are not called upon to abandon the right and the duty of judging for yourselves ; but you are called upon to become qualified for its exercise ; and in the meanwhile to keep yourselves from hasty conclusions. No ; judge you all must, as you shall

answer before God ; you must call no man master, —you have one master, even Christ. Teachers indeed we have many ; but they teach only as the scribes, not as men having authority ; and their teaching must be applied by each learner to the infallible rule which God has placed in our hands.

We conjure you not to enter upon the ministry of the Church till you have well and deeply weighed the creed to which you will give your assent before God and man. It is a great reproach for him who has set up as a teacher, to acknowledge that he had need, when he did so, to be taught the first principles of the Oracles of God ; and every one makes this acknowledgment who avows a fundamental change in his opinions. It is a most awful situation for a man to be placed in. There is really but one course for him to follow in such a case.* It is to abandon his office, to sacrifice his worldly interests ; and to pass his life in repentance.

* This, and a similar remark, in page 239, do not, of course, apply to the case of one who, like St. Paul, receives a revelation from heaven ; or of one who, like Luther, comes to the knowledge of revealed truth for the first time ; but to those who, having it in their power to weigh well, before they assent to a creed, all the evidence which God has vouchsafed to man, (as Ministers of the Church of England have,) find it necessary, after their ordination, either to forsake the ministry, and, it may be, the communion to which they belonged, or to outrage their conscience. Nor is it every variation in opinion which disqualifies a man for the office of a teacher ;—yet every change on important points is in its measure, a presumption of his unfitness for the pastoral charge, and must be grievous and humiliating ; and if often repeated, and relating to vital truths, condemn him to silence ; at any rate, force him to abstain from tampering with the faith of others.

What else can you do, if such a misfortune should befall you? Remain in the ministry, and evade your engagements, and explain away the formularies which you have subscribed? But your conscience will reproach you incessantly, and public contempt will overwhelm you. Experience shews that this expedient cannot long satisfy those who have recourse to it. Hold one creed and teach another? But this is damnable hypocrisy. Eat the bread of the Church, and lift up the heel against her? This is treason.

I speak as unto wise men, judge ye. Is it not better to meditate well on these things; to give yourselves wholly to them, before you make a solemn profession; and to take care that whatever creed you shall ultimately embrace, you may have the hope that you can continue in it grounded and settled? *It is a fearful thing, as regards a man's self also, to vary in religious opinion. Even the abandonment of error is often attended with serious consequences to the heart? The rejection of truth, for error may end, we know, in reprobation and judicial blindness. †The converts of the Pharisees were made seven-fold more the children of hell than their seducers.

However great your learning, however acute your intellect, however fertile your imagination, however powerful your speech may be, do not take

* The life of Mr. Blanco White, lately published, is full of sad lessons.

† Heb. vi. 4-38.

upon you this office and ministry, if you feel that you are not sober-minded, and that you labour under moral and physical weaknesses, which affect your judgment. There are many other employments in which you can serve God. Do not choose that in which you are likely to cause “many to stumble at the law,” as the Prophet speaks. Do not, if you are double-minded, run the risk of building wood, hay, stubble, on the foundation, and piercing yourselves through with many sorrows; but remember the fiery trial. Do not place yourselves in a position in which you may be tempted to handle the Word of God deceitfully, and “to speak lies in hypocrisy, having your conscience seared with a hot iron.” Take heed that your word toward the people of God “be not yea and nay, but in Christ be yea,” and that you may never “use lightness.” Give all diligence while yet you have opportunity, that you may learn how “you ought to behave yourselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth.”

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